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RODY THE ROVER;

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OR,

THE RIBBONMAN.

BY WILLIAM CARLETON,

AUTHOR OF "TRAITS AND STORIES OF THE IRISH
PEASANTRY," "VALENTINE M'CLUTCHY,"
"ART MAGUIRE," ETC. ETC.

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PREFACE.

THIS little Book, which was originally designed to form the Second Volume of my "Tales for the Irish People," has, at the request of the gentlemen who are engaged in the conduct of "Duffy's Library for Ireland," been made the Third of *that* Series instead of the Second of *my own*. It was written, however, with the same anxious wish to benefit my countrymen that influenced me in the composition of "Art Maguire." My object in the present work, is to show Irishmen, through the medium of Fictitious Characters—if, indeed, they can be called so—what description of persons they are in general, who introduce secret and illegal combinations among them. I think I can appeal with confidence to the people of any one district in which the curse of Ribbonism exists, whether,—if they can trace its origin at all,—they will not find that it has been first introduced by some strange vagabond of whom they knew nothing, who had the art to insinuate himself into their confidence, in order to leave the blighting principles of Ribbonism behind

him. I beg the people, therefore, to read this book carefully, satisfied as I am, that the incidents detailed in it are such as they will admit to be too true.

With respect to the *Denouement* with which, perhaps, many may feel disposed to quarrel, I must say, with great respect, that the doctrine of Poetical Justice, as it is termed, is not always the doctrine of real life, and that so long as we have many instances of successful villany before our eyes, an author ought not to be censured for allowing virtue to suffer, or villany occasionally to triumph in his pages—as it often does in the world around us.

The author has only to add, that in consequence of being forced to compress his story within fixed limits, he was put to the unpleasant necessity of running it more rapidly to a close than he otherwise would have done. Indeed, had space enough been allowed him, the proportions of the narrative would have been better observed. As it is, however, he hopes that the reader will perceive quite enough to learn from it the moral lesson which it is intended to inculcate.

DUBLIN, AUGUST 30, 1845.

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CHAPTER I.

DESCRIPTION AND TRANSFORMATION OF THE VILLAGE OF BALLYBRACKEN.

THE Village of Ballybracken was, some thirty years ago, as favorable a specimen of filth, neglect, and ignorance, as any satirist upon our national habits could wish to point out. It consisted of about two score houses, or rather huts, in some parts huddled together in twos and threes; and in others, scattered about without order or forethought; exactly as if they had been sown by broadcast. Street, or pavement of any kind there was none, unless a stripe of rutted mud in winter, with here and there a stepping-stone, could be called such; whilst in summer, nearly one-half of what the inhabitants swallowed was the afore-said mud, being now only the same curse disguised in the shape of dust. Every cabin in it

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however, could boast, without a single exception, of having before its door that fragrant nosegay, the dunghill, appropriately set in its pool of green stagnant water. This latter circumstance was, however, by no means looked upon by the people as a nuisance. We cannot certainly quarrel with our humble countrymen for collecting a dung-heap near their houses, the only point of difference between us is *its position*. So long as potatoes are their sole support, we know that to deprive them of the manure on which they plant them, would be literally to take away from them the stalk of life. What we should wish them to do, therefore, is to avoid making the dunghills so many play-grounds for their children; or collecting them in such a position as to render it impossible to enter the house, without inhaling the foetid and unwholesome stench which is perpetually exhaling from them.

Seriously, such a picture of misery as the village of Ballybracken then was, could scarcely be seen. Some of the houses were thatched with heath, others with rushes, and many of them had no other covering than scraws, that is the green sward cut into equal stripes, and laid over the roof. Inside, a stool or two; a large pot and a small one, with a couple of wooden, or earthen vessels, on a single shelf; a mended chair, perhaps; an old creel for fetching turf; a dusty salt-bag hanging up in the chimney, and a *scrahag* or *lusset*, on which to empty out the

potatoes when boiled,—constituted their principal furniture. Their fire, which in general consisted of brushwood, or *brusna*, as it is termed, was lit only at meal times to boil their potatoes; but an abiding fire remaining in the hearth for the day, was a comfort they seldom knew. A hole in the roof served for a chimney, but when the fire was lit, a thick atmosphere of smoke oozed through the whole roof, about which it wreathed itself so closely, that the said roof was often invisible. This state of things was very manifest on the inmates, every one of whom was so thoroughly spotted over with soot-drops, both in dress and complexion, that it was disgusting to look at them; and when heavy rain came, I can compare the torrents which streamed from the miserable roof, to nothing but an overgrown shower-bath of ink. In truth it was truly pitiable to see the tattered mother, or some of her naked children, emptying out before the door the water that thus descended, lest it might inundate the floor, or collect in that corner of the cabin in which they shook out their beds of straw. But in fact the squalid misery and frightful destitution of such scenes have been so often described, that it is now only necessary to assure the reader, that the villagers of Ballybracken were not a whit behind the worst of them in poverty, filth, and, what is the most painful of all, an unconsciousness of that filth, and a lazy, ignorant contentment under their poverty.

The land about it was cold, mountainous, and

of course barren, with scarcely a patch from which could be extorted anything at all like a crop. About two or three miles below them, lay a rich and fertile country thickly inhabited, and whose population were by no means wanting in most of the comforts, and some of the rustic luxuries, of life.

Ballybracken, however, was indeed in a sad state. The poor people were so far sunk in the scale of human comfort, as to be almost incapable of properly understanding the extent of their own privations. There was no school near them to which they could send their children, and of course the latter had little else to do than run about half-wild, half-naked, and half-fed; idle, lazy, and mischievous; scolding, quarrelling, and fighting among themselves, and making reprisals on each other in revenge, or in evil of some description. Flesh-meat they never tasted under their own roofs, unless at Christmas or Easter, when they contrived to purchase a few pounds of fresh pork, which they boiled and enjoyed as a luxury.

In this state was the village of Ballybracken, when one day two or three gentlemen, attended by half-a-dozen men of an humble class, made their appearance among them. They and their attendants wandered day after day about the bleak hills, digging here, and grubbing there, as if they had been searching for money; a report which soon gained ground, and drew crowds of the villagers to the hills, who dodged after them

day by day, until at length they were satisfied that all the money seekers brought away with them, was a lump or two of queer looking stone. The carrying off of these stones was looked upon by our worthy villagers as a capital joke against the strangers, who cut their stick with a flea in their ear, amidst the jeers and laughter of the enlightened inhabitants of Ballybracken.

This was all very well for about a month or two, when it appeared that the same party of stone-grubbers, in the very teeth of their superiors in the village, were stupid enough to seek the hills once more, for the purpose of still digging deeper in quest of money. The ridicule in the village was now boundless.

“Arra sure the dirty Bodaghs are diggin’ for goold in the hills above:—Oh by the, but that takes the shine!”

“Hut,” observed another, “sure these *Bodaghs* is so ignorant, that there’s many of them not much beyant the four-footed cattle!”

“But tell us,” asked another, “what did they do with the stone they carried off?”

“Why, I’m tould they boiled it, an’ like Bob M’Cann’s lobsther, it was only harder it got.”

Some ignorant fellow, however, had the temerity to report, that a wealthy company were about to work certain mines that had been discovered under the unpromising surface of the aforesaid hills.

“What, to dig for mines under hills that never produced a blessed blade of eatable grass!”

“ Oh by the hoky ! Well, let them thry their hands, sure they ’ll see the upshot ; goold about Ballybracken ! Well afther that the sky will fall ! ”

This was all very well, and the ridicule excellent ; but in about a fortnight afterwards, somehow or other, their landlord, a Mr. Ogle, in company with several gentlemen, made his appearance on the hills alluded to, and in the most unaccountable manner, suffered himself to be gulled into a belief of the prevalent report. Another month, however, sobered down their ridicule, and altogether unsettled their principles on that subject. An enterprising company had farmed the barren hills we speak of, and the villagers themselves soon became as orthodox on this subject, as the most ignorant and credulous *Bodaghs* of them all.

And now did their eyes begin to open, and now did they begin also to perceive, that the *Bodaghs* were not altogether so senseless “ as the baists that graize ; ” and that grubbing into the hills for money, whatever it might take out of the pockets of the company, was an excellent plan for putting cash into their own. To their astonishment, and I may add delight, they found, that instead of being in a state of idleness, and even of actual mendicancy during some parts of the year, they had now constant employment at triple, and sometimes quadruple wages. This was unquestionable, as the jingle of the silver every Saturday night settled their scepticism on that point.

Other beneficial alterations were now soon to follow. In the first place, it was found necessary to build in the village a house for the Superintending Agent, and also to rent a few others—the best of course, for the Clerk, and some of the principal miners. These were soon slated, and bad as had been the appearance of the village huts heretofore, their aspect now, was, by the force of contrast, an indication of utter misery, want of cleanliness, and shameless indifference to personal comfort, on the part of the people. But what will not a good example and practical knowledge even in the most ordinary circumstances do? Attached to each of the new houses was a garden behind, and a small plot for shrubs and flowers before. Good taste and care soon brought these to something like order, so that they appeared as a standing censure upon the neglected and slovenly character of the village. It is true, in the first instance, they were certainly looked upon as unwarrantable innovations upon the long standing usages of the people; and the little flower-plot before, as a poor, sickly, sentimental substitute for the good honest old stink of the dunghill, to which their noses were so well accustomed.

“Flowers indeed! Cock them up wid flowers no less! Could one boil a flower, or ait a flower, or do anything else wid it than stick it as a posey in one’s button-hole;—that is, if a body *had* a button-hole; wherein it was well known, that there wasn’t three safe button-holes in all Ballybracken. No, what’s their flowers in comparishment wid a

good dish of soft nettles of a sharp spring day, to clane the blood, and drive out a wholesome rash upon the childre, the crathurs?"

"An' they expect us too, to take the poor dunghill from before the door, an' it our best friend! Catch us at it indeed.—Faith, the daicent dunghill never did anything to make it ashamed, an' for the same raison it isn't in a hole or corner we'll put it, to plaise a pack of ignorant *Bodaghs*, that doesn't know the value of such a thing;—fellows that were never fed upon any thing else, barrin' beef an' bread an' bacon, the hathens!"

Under these circumstances it need not be wondered at, that the hand of spoliation was occasionally laid upon the flower-plots, whose contents were, in some instances, torn up and scattered about the streets, by some nightly depredator, who, resolutely determined to support the old usages which had been so long sacred to ignorance, and to prejudice, her almost inseparable companion.

Time, however, and knowledge work great changes. Money, too, if it be the root of evil, is also the root of all improvement; and the Agent being fortunately a man who took a lively interest in the welfare of these poor people, taught them how to improve their houses; and insisted, that habits of domestic industry and cleanliness, were essential to their own comforts, and the duty besides of their wives and daughters. The people, seeing what comfort was, soon began to feel this. They had now a standard by which

to measure their own ignorances, prejudices, and errors; and in consequence, the first faint indications of improvement began to appear. A house, for instance, was newly thatched; by and by it was whitewashed; but a man could not have a spongy floor in a whitewashed house;—surely no, a new floor, if only for consistency's sake, must follow that; but then, what is a new floor and a well thatched whitewashed house, if there is not a decent bed and convenient furniture? So much being now accomplished, their children, coming out of so respectable a cottage, could not appear in rags, and plain clothing was not so *very* dear. Then the dunghill might as well be removed a little farther from the door, in order to leave something like a plain way to the house.

“Because you see if it's put farther to the left, that beautiful green dub, that the stepping stones are through, will run off and leave the place quite clean and dry.”

Thus did improvement creep gradually in, until not only each individual house, but the whole village, was changed incredibly for the better. As yet, however, the streets remained unpaved; but the landlord now, to his dishonor be it spoken, was *forced* to do from *shame* what he ought long before to have done from *duty*. He contributed reluctantly to the paving of the streets.

It has been often said, that one error, or one misfortune draws another after it, and we believe that this is truth; but so also does one comfort:

for the moment that a taste for better things is created, whether morally or physically, the progressive character of knowledge will not suffer the mind to rest, until the desired point is gained, provided the means of reaching it lie within ourselves. It was now found that a Provision shop and a Grocery concern, upon a moderate scale, would be very useful to the inhabitants; and it has never been known that where the demand exists, the supply has been long wanting. Every step in comfort and independence occasioned many and reasonable wants, that required new manifestations of skill and industry or enterprize to meet them. The wear and tear of machinery, rendered it necessary to have a smith and carpenter in the village; and the surprising progress which these salutary changes were every day making, soon brought the stone-mason, the shoemaker, and the tailor into full practice. In short, all proofs of growing prosperity began to put themselves forward agreeably and distinctly; the well paved streets; comfortable houses; well stocked gardens; neat plots before the door; clean and healthy looking children, decently clad, and cheerful fathers and mothers, might now be seen in the village of Ballybracken, where they never, within the memory of man, had been seen before. It is unnecessary, however, to go too far into detail in matters which every reader can understand as well as myself. Five years had scarcely elapsed, when our village presented an aspect of unusual neatness, order, and comfort.

Two regular lines of new slated cottages were erected ; a school-house was built, shops were opened, dunghills *disappeared* but were *not abolished* ; gardens were enclosed, and patches of land cultivated. The villagers and their wives could not be known as the same beings whom we have described a page or two back. They were now well fed, decently and warmly clothed, and their children clean and creditable to look at. They lived, in fact, to recant their old and absurd prejudices ; and to laugh, with a considerable hanging of the lip, however, at their former ridicule of the *Bodagh*.

It is false and unjust to say, that the Irish when they come to know and taste its sweets, are insensible either to comfort or cleanliness. Unfortunately neither the one nor the other is the general habit of the country, in consequence of unreasonable and exorbitant rents. Throughout Ireland, with the exception of the North, they have not, especially in remote places like Ballybracken, any adequate standard or model, to guide them ; and it is not every man who has sufficient strength of mind to become a reformer in the domestic habits of his house, the order of his farm-yard, or the system of his agriculture. The Irish, besides, have a singular attachment to the customs and usages of their forefathers, whether right or wrong ; and although this is frequently enough absurd in the extreme, yet it is often difficult to root it out, or to get them to understand the principle upon which a wholesome

improvement should be made ; we ought not to forget, that an act of parliament was necessary, and scarcely sufficient, to prevent us from ploughing by our horses' tails. This should open our eyes, and teach us that the innovation which we then looked upon then as barbarous, is *now* known by ourselves to have been one that removed a most inhuman and cruel custom from the country.

Ballybracken was now prosperous, the people happy, their younger children receiving education, and their grown ones employment. They looked up to the Agent of these works with affection and gratitude, because they saw and felt that he was their friend, and manifested a lively interest in their welfare. The small public-house which had been opened did not seem to prosper ; for, as the people were contented and comfortable, they stood in need of no artificial excitement to raise spirits that were never depressed. In short, peace and good will abided with them ; for, in truth, they had little to wish for, and nothing of which to complain. They now knew the difference between knowledge and ignorance—they were, in fact, an educated people, who could look back upon their old prejudices and ignorances with good-humoured contempt, and who clung no longer to their dirt and their dung-hills, their bad air, soot-drops, and shake-down beds. It is true the grown population, whom we have just called educated, had received no literary instruction, as did their children ; still, they soon became acquainted with a higher range of

social and domestic duties, and felt the benefit of that knowledge which trains and elevates the feelings to a proper conception of what every man in this world owes to himself—that is, an honourable determination to improve, by all fair and legitimate means, his own condition, and that of those who have only him to look up to in it.

It would be difficult now to find a neater, cleaner, or more comfortable village than that of Ballybracken. That air of happiness and repose, which nothing but industry and peace can bestow, was now visible on it and its inhabitants; and, indeed, if a man stood on one of the hills at whose feet it lay, and contemplated its double row of neat white houses, shining in the evening light of a calm summer's sun, and marked the blue columns of smoke that rose from the chimneys, untroubled by a single breeze, he could not help wishing, that every village in the kingdom would take it as a model, and thus enjoy the quiet comforts of the happy and peaceful people who lived in it. Happy and peaceful they now are, neither idle nor mischievous, nor anxious to embroil themselves in the mad and senseless feuds of either faction or party. Their amusements—for they are not without amusements, as what people ought? are all of a harmless but healthful description. Neither are the duties of their religion either forgotten or neglected. Sunday comes to them with a cheerful and festal spirit; for the father and mother, attended by their family, can make a decent and independent ap-

pearance among their fellow-parishioners. The usual argument against going to mass no longer exists in Ballybracken ; nor are any such conjugal dialogues as the following heard in it of a Sunday morning :—

Wife—"Jemmy, what 'ud you think now, if it was only by way of novelty, of goin' to hear mass, and gettin' a mouthful of prayers, for God knows you want them—(ha ! consumin' to you for a blackguard pig ; there, it has spilt the pratie-wather all over the floor—ha, ha, and ha, agin !' Now, take that, you divil's limb of an animal, that's a curse to the house, so you are—throth *you* might be lazy enough an' nail a bit of boord to the foot of that ould door, to keep it out, the thief.")

Husband—"An' why the sorra did you go to strike the crathur wid the spade ? There, now, you've lamed it, or, maybe, broke its leg. Look at that ; the sorra foot it has to put undher it. sorra cut the hands off you, but you're ready wid your unlucky blow at the poor crathur !"

Wife—"Ay, an' *you're* ready wid your oath, an' your 'sorra cut the hands off you ;' but as I said, it 'ud be far fitttherer for you to brush up them ould rags upon you, and go to hear the Word o' God."

"Is it in this trim you'd have me go ? exposin' our condition to the whole parish !"

"It's not your *coat*, but *yourself*, that God will jidge on the last day ; but then, *fareer gairh*, it's little religion an' little prayers goes far wid

you. Do you ever expect to face God at all, wid the life you're ladin'?"

"I'm not sayin' it's my *coat* he'll jidge; neither is it *your gown* he'll jidge, Molly; an' as for mass or prayers, I don't see that you've got the start o' me as far as all that comes to. Be my faix, it's blue-mowlded your bades is, I'll engage, if they war examined."

"Oh! that's it; every one knows that you're good at a back answer; especially when you want to get out o' the truth. Me! oh, God help *me!* wid one child at my breast an' another at my knee, an' the whole house an' family on *my* back. Oh, the Lord help me! I say; widout a shoe to my foot, or a cap to my head. A fine figure I'd cut goin' to mass, indeed! And if you warn't a mane-spirited man, you'd blush to see me goin' among sthrangers the way I am."

"Very well, then; that ought to taich you to have feelins for them that's as badly off as yourself. Go to mass, indeed! Sure divil a thing I resemble but a stack of rags goin' to a paper-mill!"

"Throth an' if you keep away from your duty till you're dressed like a gintleman, you'll have time enough to get grey before you throuble it. At any rate, it's a spade you ought to have in your fist every day, workin' for me an' your childre, like a man—what you're *not*."

"I don't sit from mornin' till night roastin' my shins over the fire, an' makin' bird's nests in the ashes wid my heels, like a lazy trollop—what you *are*."

"Oh, that's it! Go on; you'll give the back answers still! Divil a more you're good for, you unmanly blackguard. Poor as I am I'm respected by the neighbours, an' that's more than you can say for yourself, you poor *pittingue*!"

"You had better not provoke me, I tell you. Sure every one knows that you're the worst tongued barge in all Ballybracken—that's well known. God knows it was the black day that ever I seen your face; an' I'll tell you what, by this blessed pipe in my hand, if you don't keep a civil tongue in your head, I'll give you a flakin' that you'll remember."

"Oh, in troth, I would'nt put it past you, an' the child in my arms too; but sure it 'ud be the wondher if you wor any thing else than the vagabone you are, or any man that never shows his face at his parish chapel, or bends his knee undher priest or friar, but lives like a hathen or worse. However there 'ill come a day you'll be sorry for it all, an' for not mindin' *my* words, an' that, may be, when it'll be too late—a day afther the fair wid you."

"God bless us! what a prophet you are! Why don't you apply some of it to yourself, that wants it worse than I do."

Oh, no! there were no such lively dialogues as the above to enliven the morning of the Lord's day; for, indeed, there is no gainsaying the truth of the old proverb, that as poverty creeps in at the door, love will fly out of the window. It is equally true, however, that in proportion as

poverty disappears, and industry with all its comforts returns, so does love, attended by his sweet and delightful retinue of the domestic virtues and affections.

Oh, no! we repeat; so far from such dialogues being the staple production of every Sunday morning's occupation in Ballybracken, this evil custom had changed as much as any of the other old usages connected with the ignorant habits of their former lives.

It is now a Sunday morning in their peaceful and prosperous days, when Jemmy and Molly, together with their children enjoy all the rational comforts that are fairly and justly due to their improved condition.

Molly—"Jemmy, will you look out, *achora*, an' try if you can see Kitty comin' round the corner o' the road from first mass. Isn't it a great blessin' that she's able to take care o' the two young ones while I'm at the chapel?"

"Throth it is, Molly; it's herself that's the sonsy, handy, crathur, goin' through the house so quiet and sweet-tempered, that you'd never know she's in it. An' how regular the crathur attends early mass, and how punctual she goes to her duty at Christmas an' Aisther. Oh! no wondher she'd have the grace o' God, an' that there 'ud be a blessin,' as there is, upon every thing she puts her hand to."

"Throth an' there is that, then."

"Begad, Molly, you have my shirt as white as a burned bone, and my blay stockings for summer

looks beautiful ; altogether I'm a great turn out ; eh ?”

“ Take care, now, don't take all wid you : maybe here's as nate a consarn as yours any day. Fasten these hooks, will you, between my shoulders. Sorra one o' the new gown but's a beauty all out ; an' although Sally Shape did not over much like it, I knew it 'ud make up well. Arra didn't the childre, the crathurs, look clane an' dacent goin' to the Catechiz class before mass ?”

“ Did'nt they ?”

“ Especially poor Barney, afther his sickness. Throth he has a complexion that the son of a lord mightn't be ashamed of.”

“ Ah ! Molly, there's nothin' like the schoolin' ; an' you don't know the comfort I feel when I considher that they're gettin' the larnin'. I never look at a book, or a piece of writin', that I don't feel my heart cut bekase I don't know a letther of it.”

“ Well, but isn't it a great thing to us both that the crathurs can read us sich knowledgable advice—that's the wrong hook, man ; there, that'll do—sich knowledgable advice out o' them little books, taichin' us what to do, an' what we ought *not* to do ; how to keep our houses clane an' nate, inside an' out ; how we're always to be doin' something that's useful ; how we're to be sober an' punctual—up early an' down late ; an', above all things, not to neglect our *religious duties*.”

“ Ay, indeed, Molly ; an' to respect ourselves, an' to avoid bad company, an', above all things,

to have nothin' to do with these saicret societies, or Ribbonism in any shape. Eh! why here's Kitty! Arra, Kitty dear, where were you this minute when I went to see if you wor comin'?"

"Why, as I passed the garden, I thought I might as well cut a couple o' heads of cabbages to boil wid the bacon, as to be goin' back agin for them."

"Bedad that pig, Molly," exclaims the husband, looking towards the chimney-corner, where it hung in fat flitches of bacon, "that last pig turned out famously; but I knew it would cut up well."

"Well, sorra one, Jemmy, but it went hard wid *me* an' *Barney* to ait the *kidney*. That I mayn't sin, but in spite o' what Father Hayes said, I was afeard there would grow a kidney out of both our cheeks, an' hang there as long as we lived."*

"Hut, woman, there's many an ould piece o' nonsense that'll be sent a *shaughran* as well as that. Well, are you ready to start? I can tell you we'll have very little time to spare for the twelve o'clock mass."

"I'm jist bringin' this little bottle to fetch home a sup o' holy wather to keep in the house. Come now, in the name o' God. Kitty, alanna, put down the dinner about twelve, jist when the

* The superstition is, that neither mother nor son, father nor daughter, can eat the same kidney under the penalty mentioned in the text.

shadow of the gavel reaches the whitethorn ; an', above all things, achora, don't let them crathurs too near the fire. You'll find a dhrink for little Jimmy in the green jug, there on the middle shelf, an' warm it, acushla, in the skillet, for a cowl'd dhrink does'nt agree wid him."

Each, then, comfortably dressed, clean and easy in mind, proceeded with a serious but cheerful spirit, to worship God with thankfulness of heart, and to place themselves, with renewed faith, under his Almighty protection.

Such was the village of Ballybracken at a time when it becomes our duty to bring a new actor on the humble stage of our little drama.

CHAPTER II.

IT was one of those breathless and serene evenings towards the close of May ; the sun wanted somewhat less than an hour of setting, but from the cloudless aspect of the sky, and the faint hues of purple which began gradually to deepen as he approached the west, it was evident that he would go down to his evening rest, in that calm and majestic splendour which makes our early fancy imagine, that the beautiful clouds he leaves behind him, are the golden gates of heaven, through which the souls of the just pass into peace and happiness. The fields were green, and the evening light lay upon them with a hue which blended its radiance with their verdure, so as to produce that charm, of almost indescribable beauty, which infuses, without our being conscious of its origin, a sense of hope and pure delight into the heart. The trees and green hedges were vocal with the melody of a thousand warblers ; the cuckoo's happy note was still heard, as was the hum of a truant or over indus-

trious bee that hurried home, as if apprehensive of being belated. Up at the other end of the green, where it shelved into the smooth sandy edge of the calm river, were the village children at play among themselves; whilst their shouting and laughter, as they were dispersed into little busy groups, came upon the ear in touching accordance with the simple harmonies that breathed from surrounding nature. The labours of the day had for some time closed, and the young men of the village of Ballybracken, were amusing themselves in those harmless, but healthful, feats, which constitute a considerable portion of simple and primitive happiness. Some were wrestling, some throwing the stone; whilst others again, were engaged in the active and manly sport of leaping;—for we should have informed our readers, that from the lower end of Ballybracken a tolerably sized green stretched down to the river that flowed past, on the banks of which, about fifty yards above the ford where it was crossed, the inhabitants bleached their yarn and household linen. Standing neatly dressed in small groups were many of the village maidens, some sewing and others knitting, and all interested in the success of a brother, cousin, or a sweetheart, as the case happened; whilst removed at a little distance, might be observed a couple of either sex, here and there engaged in apparently deep and serious conversation; or indulging in that light-hearted mirth which is only to be found in the buoyancy of spirits that are yet

simple and not depressed by crime. Tempted by the smoothness of the green sward, one of the crack dancers of the neighbourhood, Ned Moy-nagh now calls upon Nannie Duffy to sing him the College Hornpipe, or Shaun Buie, or Jackson's Morning Brush, a call which immediately puts an end to the other sports, and brings the youngsters of the whole village, male and female about him. Then indeed commences the performance of the jig, reel, or hornpipe ;—and to such living melody as has seldom been heard to proceed from female lips. How could any one, however, look upon these lips and expect anything except music and sweetness from them? But now the shades of this peaceful evening are deepening ; the crows seek their ancient rookery at Corick for the night ; the cows are assembled in the village, and by their gentle and moan-like lowings, call upon the well known maidens to ease them of their fragrant stores ; and lastly, sure sign of approaching twilight, the hum of the snipe, as he rises and sinks above the mist-covered meadow, reminds them, as does the falling honey-dew, that it is time to close their innocent pastimes for the day.

This was a happy group, composed as it was of young persons of both sexes, each remarkable for that freshness of heart, and purity of morals which are to be found in their most touching simplicity, among those who people the more distant recesses of rustic life—far away among

the green vales and pastoral retreats of our beloved country.

As yet, however, they had not dispersed, nor indeed had Ned Moynagh finished the hornpipe of Shaun Buie, when a young man apparently a stranger, as in fact he was, turned the winding of the bridle road that crossed the river, and at rather a brisk pace approached and joined them.

"God save all here, my friends!" he exclaimed in that good humoured and comic tone of voice which never fails to go directly to the Irish heart; "a light foot carries a light heart, and a light heart a bright eye, all the world over,—ha, ha, ha,—eh?—an' who denies that, any way?"

"An' what does the *bright eye* carry?" asked Nannie, after yielding to the mirthful contagion which his hearty laugh produced among them all.

"Throth, avourneen, yours will carry my heart home wid you, at any rate."

"I dont think it 'll be a heavy burden then," she replied; "trifles are never weighty, you know,—ha, ha, ha!"

"Good, you bloomer—ha, ha, ha!—devil a sharper—faith I'm bate:—but who is this that was murdherin the clocks as I came over? eh? ha, ha, ha!"

This sally produced another volley at the expense of Ned, who joined in it as heartily as any of them.

"Well," replied Ned, "all I say is, that if

you can do Shaun Buie in betther style, Nannie here wont let you want the music.—Will you Nannie?”

“Is it me? Troth it ’ud be a bad day I’d refuse him that,” replied the light hearted girl; “such as it is, he’s welcome to it ’wid a heart and a half.”

“Ah my good friend,” said the stranger to Ned, “if you had got over a journey of near forty long miles to day, may be its little dancin’ ’ud go far wid you;—sowl, its not much music you’d take out of Shaun Buie, I tell you;—but come, here goes, a heavy heart seldom combs a grey head: come, a colleen,” addressing Nannie, “I have thribled the same tune afore now, an’ will agin, plaise goodness.—Here’s the way they dance a hornpipe in my country—whish, hurroo!”

He commenced, or rather was about to commence, when bounding down from the village, came a young man about nineteen or twenty years of age. Every eye was turned on him with mingled delight and pride, and indeed this was by no means surprising, for we question whether it would be easy in any country to find so striking an instance of symmetry, strength, activity, and manly beauty, as were combined in his person. His hair was fair, his well proportioned features, radiant with youth, and his blue laughing eye was a perfect globe of living light.

“Ay,” said the stranger, eying him with admiration, “here he comes that never seen to-

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morrow : an', by my own song, the cock o' the walk for many a long stretch round the spot I'm standin' on,—or my word goes for nothing; *awouh!* But now, my purty girl, for the music; I'll show him how to dance a hornpipe, any way."

"Don't be too sure o'that," said they, and immediately the traveller commenced, and to do him justice, he fairly eclipsed Ned Moynagh, who was honest enough to admit himself vanquished.

The stranger's style of dancing in fact partook of his character, being neat, easy, and mirthful; he cracked his fingers, threw in many steps that were full of fun; winked at the girls as they stood admiring him; cheered and applauded himself, and put out his tongue once or twice at a solemn looking, awkward fellow, with sore eyes and a crying face, named long Ned Donnelly, in a way that threw them into roars of laughter. When the hornpipe was over, which he finished with a bound more than a yard high, he flew to Nannie Duffy, exclaiming:

"Whish, your sows, sure we can't forget the music, if we're daicent;" and immediately seizing her, he imprinted more than one or two kisses on her lips, with such an easy and humorous familiarity, that she was forced to laugh as loud as the rest, even whilst she blushed at his "assurance," as she termed it.

"Why thin sorra take that skite," she exclaimed, glancing at him with a laughing eye,

however, even whilst she spoke, "but he has the assurance of ould nick."

This she said, whilst pinning up her rich and copious hair, for which indeed she was celebrated, and for the dishevelling of which she thanked him in her heart, in as much as it gave her an opportunity of displaying to more advantage the natural beauty of her elastic figure, and the variety of rustic charms which she certainly possessed.

The familiar call of the still un milked cattle however, at length compelled the maidens to hurry home, which they did, all agreeably surprised and highly amused by the pleasant stranger, whose appearance and character they discussed with a degree of interest far transcending the very brief opportunity they had of knowing him.

The young men, now left to themselves, strolled towards the village more slowly, with the exception of the stranger, who looked thoughtful, and seemed altogether to forget his mirth. His eyes passed from one to another, as if in suspense and uncertainty, and at length he asked them, where the road which turned up towards the mountains led.

"Then you're a stranger in this part of the country," said Ned Moynagh, "or you would know that this road doesn't go farther than three or four hills in that direction."

"I am a stranger, as you say," he replied, "and,

to tell you the truth, a little on the shaughran for the present."

"How is that?" said Ned.

"Why you must know," he returned, "that I've got into throuble abit; an' what's more, I'm not likely to get out of it in a hurry."

"Well," observed another, "its a good man's case to be in throuble.—How did it come about?"

"Much the ould way," he replied; "the Orangemen and we had a field day; we lost one and they lost another. I did my endayvours wid one o' them, and the scoundrel in ordher to punish me refused to recover; devil a lie in it; ha, ha, ha!—Well, no matther; the truth is, now, I'am as you see me, widout a friend to stan' by me, or a roof to cover me; but divil may care," said he, resuming his spirits; "the world's wide, an' I'm not growin' to it—so who's afeard!"

No more was necessary. Their sympathies as men, and as members of the same creed were at once engaged,—in addition to that spirit of generous hospitality which so signally characterizes our warm-hearted countrymen.

"Don't say that you want either a friend or a roof," replied the young fellow whom we have already described, and whose name was Thomas M'Mahon; "you only fought as you had a right to do, against your own enemies and the enemies of your religion; an' God forbid that the man who defends himself or it, should ever want a friend to back, or a roof to cover, him."

The conversation then changed, and in a few minutes the stranger became as light hearted as before.

"Boys," said he, "this is a fine looking country; and now could any of you tell me *what height is the ground we stand on?*"*

"Faith," said they in reply, or rather said M'Mahon, laughing, "it would take Johnny Moran and his Jacob-staff to tell that."

"I suppose so," replied the other, with a disappointed air; "but in the mean time, I would rather you knew it yourselves, that's all; however, for the present it does n't signify, there's a good time comin'."

"I think," said long Ned Donnelly, "that you sarved your time to a Riddle maker, bekaise you dale in nothin' else it seems; if you spoke so as that you could be undherstood, we might give you an answer."

"Ay!" said the other, in his light and easy manner, "it's you that's the slip for it; the very boy to guess any thing you know at three guesses;—but sure you're a born beauty, like Billy Neelins's foal; ha, ha, ha!"

This raised the laugh against Ned, as he knew it would, for, brief as was the period of his presence among them, he was able to perceive, which indeed he did at a glance, that honest, awkward Ned was the fag and butt, of his acquaintance.

* This was formerly one of the *Ribbon* questions.

A scene of good humoured banter now took place, in which the stranger eclipsed all competition. Nothing indeed could surpass the ready and happy character of his repartees; although at the same time it might have been observed by an experienced person, or one who had travelled much among the people, that his language was rather the result of a memory that retained the traditionary jests of the lower classes, than the offspring of mother wit, and immediate invention. If his sayings, however, were not actually his own, he applied them as happily as if they had been, and indeed there were few there who did not give him full credit for originality in most of them.

They had now reached the village, in the centre of which they were grouped, when approaching at a slow pace from a direction of the road opposite to that by which the stranger had joined them, they perceived a little tight looking smart old man, with thin cheeks, sunken, or rather as if it were sucked into two chasms between his jaws, long grey hair and black piercing eyes, that looked upon you with glances that were extremely keen and penetrating.

"Begad, boys," said Moynagh, "we had better make ourselves scarce; here's an ould divil's clip, and if he gets his tongue at us, we'll carry blisters for a week to come."

"His bark's worse than his bite," replied M'Mahon; "we'll stop and have a piece of fun wid him."

"Let him an' our friend the stranger here have a turn out," observed another of them; "if he does'n't button your lip for you, I'm not my mother's son at all events," he added, addressing the other.

"It's a sight for sore eyes," said Ned Donnelly, rubbing his own at the same time "to see him; it's now near a twelvemonth since he was in this part of the country."

The ludicrous coincidence between the proverb and the malady with which Ned's optics happened to be afflicted, occasioned a fresh burst of mirth among the youngsters, in the midst of which the old man joined them. He stood and eyed them keenly for some moments, his chin resting upon the crook of his stick; for though slight and active, he had something of a stoop. They all turned naturally towards him, with the exception of the stranger, who, whether from accident or design, stood with his face averted; whilst with one hand he kept searching his pockets, as if something had been lost. The old man went over and laying the end of the staff upon his shoulder, the other immediately turned round and faced him. Something like the slightest possible start was observed on the part of the old man, or at least a more concentrated and piercing gaze at the stranger; who, on the other hand surveyed the new comer with all the calmness of a person to whom he and his affairs were totally unknown and indifferent.

"So, boys," observed the old fellow, "I see

there's a strange face among you. Arra what sky did *you* drop from, young man?" he asked, and as he did, he slightly raised his eyebrows with an expression that seemed sarcastic and contemptuous.

"From the sky that covers sweet Kilscaddan, if you know where that is."

"Kilscaddan! I do," replied the other: "it sends a man to the hangman wanst a year:—are you long on your way to *him*, avic?"

This satirical inquiry raised a laugh at the expense of the stranger, who replied:

"That's a way I don't travel by, and never will either."

"Sich may be your own opinion," retorted the old man, "but for all that, them that follows your steps will be apt to find themselves on it in the long run. What name might you carry in the mean time, for in this part of the country we don't lik to call nicknames?"

"That's because you have a civil tongue in your head," replied the young man, laughing; "but regarding my name, if you call me Rody the Rover, it 'll be a good guess."

"Very well," said the old man, "Rody the Rover will do for the present; one at a time is enough, you know; still I'd like to hear what they call you in Kilscaddan."

"If I had light I'd tell you," replied the Rover, at whom the old fellow's last hint had occasioned another laugh.

"Ay, ay, boys," said he addressing them,

"laugh away ; take care it won't be laugh to-day and cry to-morrow wid yez. Here's a lad will be apt to bring some of ye to *Swingman's* acquaintance ; I'm no great scholar myself," he continued with his usual bitterness of manner, "but yet I can read gallows in his face as plain as a pick-axe ;" so saying, he shook his stick at the stranger, by way, as it were of a warning, and entered one of the houses, leaving the young fellows highly amused at his sallies, and apparently none of them more so than the stranger himself.

"Does that ould chap spit *aqua fortis*?" he asked, laughing, "for if he doesn't, his tongue belies him. Who is he, and what's his name?"

"He's jist what you see him," replied M'Mahon, "a crabbed ould devil, that goes about from place to place, and from house to house ; stoppin' a week wid this one, and a week wid that one ; and sometimes he'll take to a distant part of the kingdom, and we won't see him for a year may be. His name's Antony Tracy ; but nobody can say exactly where he's from, or what he was ; for if any one should axe him a question he'd scald them wid that tongue of his. The name he's best known by is, 'Ticklin Tony,' in regard of the bitterness of his words ; bekaise every word from his lips is only another name for a blister."

"Faix it's myself can b'lieve you," said the Rover ; laughing, "you might as well shake

hands wid a red hot poker as spake to him ; wid every touch he takes the skin away."

Having uttered these words in that light and easy spirit, which appeared to be so perfectly constitutional in him, he and young M'Mahon entered the house of the latter, or rather of his father, where he was received with a degree of honest warmth and welcome, which could, perhaps, not be paralleled out of our own green island.

CHAPTER III.

EVIL COMMUNICATION.

THE family of Brian M'Mahon into which Rody the Rover has been just received, consisted of himself, his wife, one son—the fine young fellow whom we have already described, and a daughter, named Alice; a girl every way worthy of standing beside her handsome and manly brother. She was tall and elastic in figure; and in addition to the possession of a complexion exquisitely transparent and youthful, her face was remarkable for a sweetness of expression that was perfectly irresistible. Her dark eyes flashed with that light which youth and an utter freedom from guile only can give; and her smile displayed a set of teeth, which could not, especially when surrounded by two such laughing lips, be looked upon with indifference. Her beautiful brown hair was so abundant and long, that when shaken out she could almost conceal her whole person with it. In consequence of but slight exposure to the sun or winds, her skin possessed a delicacy of tint, that gave naturally a gentle and lady-like

air to her carriage and whole appearance ; her hands were soft, small, and white, and beseemed the station of a woman of rank, more than they did the daughter of an humble peasant. Altogether, there was some irresistible charm about her, the power of which, every one who came within her influence was forced to admit. In fact it was that blending together of dignity and innocence in her beautiful person, which at once fills the soul with admiration and love.

Brian M'Mahon himself was a fine specimen of the old Milesian. His features were ample ; his forehead lofty ; and his finely turned head, was stripped of hair, except behind, where it fell in long white ringlets over his shoulders. His face, whilst it gave unequivocal indications of health, was shaded with a slight expression of melancholy ; and in his eye, which was clear and placid, might be read the mild evidences of benevolence and feeling. His wife was one of those simple-minded, but earnest women, who believe that the whole scope of female duty lies within the range of domestic life. She left not any duty that was connected with it undischarged ; and so little had she seen of the world, or been tainted by its spirit, that we believe in our souls, she was absolutely unconscious of her own virtues ; or of the meekness and benignity with which she passed through the path of humble life. Such is the family in which our lively friend, Rody the Rover, is at present domesticated ; and in which he is received with a feeling of kindness

that did honor to their hearts ; a feeling which prompted them to receive him, because he was a stranger, and in trouble.

The next morning he was up by day break, and being asked by his young friend, with whom he had slept, why he arose so early, he replied, that such was his habit : " but do not you disturb yourself on my account ;" he said, " I can't lie in bed after I awake,—so I will take a stroll out and look at the counthry." He accordingly did so, and gently closing the unbarred door after him, he sallied out to the streets, and, as if in imitation of the early songsters in the glen behind the village, he broke out into song, and commenced " Willy Reilly," which he sang at the top of his lungs, and with an excellent voice. He was proceeding down the street on this melodious stroll, looking with a keen and searching glance at the houses on each side of him, until at length he heard a tap or two at a particular window on his left. The window was one of those small diamond pained ones, which are sometimes found on the property of those landlords who identify themselves with their tenantry, and think it *a duty* to promote their prosperity and happiness. This opened on hinges, as most of them do, and as Rody drew nigh, the thin face, and keen eye of Tickling Tony were trust out, as if their owner awaited with impatience for his approach.

" Go down to the glen below," whispered the old fellow, " and when you enter it from the road to your left hand, keep walkin' on, till you meet

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a Spring Well, wid a broad stone beside it ;—wait for me there.”

Rody merely nodded, and immediately resuming “Willy Reilly,” was proceeding down the street, when he was encountered by Ned Moynagh, who had admitted his defeat at the hornpipe so good humouredly the evening before. Now, Rody saw at a glance, that his short interview with Tony, could not, from his position, have escaped him. He accordingly ceased the song, and bade the other good-morrow.

“Ha, ha, ha! what do you think?” he said, “but that ould,—what’s this you call him?—the bitther ould blade that we wor spakin’ to last night—”

“Ticklin Tony.”

“The same; well, what do you think, but the ould codger opened the window, an’ make’s a sign to me to come to him; of coorse I went, and when he got me near him, he whispers to me, as if it was for life and death: ‘will you answer me the thruth for wanst,’ says he, ‘if I ax you a question?’”

““Honour bright, says I,—‘not a doubt of it; I never was able to tell a lie in my life.’”

“Is that,” says the bitther ould divil, “*the famous tune that the ould cow died wid!*—an’ he drew back wid a grin, an’ shut the windy in my face; ha, ha, ha! So, God be wid you, an’ take care of yourself.

Och, rise up Willy Reilly an’ come alongst wid me,” &c.

“Faix it’s yourself that has the light heart,” observed Ned aloud; “if one is to judge by what they see, the world’s no trouble to you.”

The morning was beautiful, and the early breezes were loaded with the fragrance of the season. The earth was flooded with light, and there was all the melody, and business, and bustle, that characterize the feathered creation at that delicious hour going on about him; whilst in the glen below, which was thickly covered with the wild copse-wood, peculiar to such places; the eye was gratified by the myriads of dew-drops that glistened and quivered in the sun; or fell in showers off the branches, as a bird lit upon them, or sprung into its native element, as if its little heart beat with the joy and rapture that seemed to fill all animated nature around it. He turned to the left, as he had been directed, and following the serpentine path of the river, soon found himself at the broad stone mentioned by Tickling Tony. In a few minutes the old man, who had come by a shorter path down one side of the glen, joined him, and both looked at each other earnestly, but with such a gaze, that a spectator would have found it a difficult task to determine whether they did so in friendship or enmity.

“Well,” said the old man, “your’re not hanged yet, I see.”

“No,” replied the Rover; “I think you may believe your eyes.”

“I sometimes think,” replied the other, “that if I seen you dangling from the gibbet, I’d

scarcely believe them ; but at all events if you take my advice, you will get out of the country as fast as you can."

"It's easily said," replied the other, "but not so easily done ; as it is, I am not in much danger here ; besides, you can't imagine that I feel anxious to go to a strange country with empty pockets."

"Why, is your blood-money gone so soon ?"

"It's nearly spent," said the other ; "but in the mean time, don't speak just so loud, especially when you happen to allude to *that* subject ; they say walls have ears, and so may bushes."

"An evil conscience goes nearer the mark than an ould proverb like that," replied the old man bitterly ; "as for my part, I think there's a fate over you, and a hard one, or you would n't lie on Irish ground this many a month.—You are dancin' about the gallows, and you'll get it yet. Faith, you just put me in mind of a moth, that won't be warned, but keeps wheelin' and buzzin' about, until it knocks itself against the candle, where it sticks in the blaze, and is burned at last. Take my word for it, you'll knock yourself against the hangman, and will stick in his noose in the long run. One escape was enough I think."

"You talk without knowing what you say," replied the Rover ; "I am not acting by myself now ; this is no solitary speculation of my own, I can assure you."

"It's a bad speculation then, or *you* would n't

have a hand in it. You war ever and always prone to mischief. If God bestowed good gifts upon you, you know the use you made of them : and when your father gave you the education he did, its little he thought, or dreamed, how you would use it."

"I did n't come here to be lectured," said Rody, "but to know how long it is since you have seen Ellen. I myself have reason to think, that the *other madam* would leave the country on receiving a certain sum of money ;—but at the same time, I know she is treacherous and vindictive, and perhaps only wishes to get me in her power."

"Don't trust her," replied the old fellow ; "if she ever does, you will go *beyant*,* and no mistake at all."

"I doubt so," replied the Rover ; "but can you tell me where she is now ?"

"No ; I cannot ; but I have *raison* to suppose, that she's on your trail. However, devil's cure to you ; why did you—

"Marry her, you are about to say ; why, because, I could not otherwise have come at the money. Nothing short of the regular forms and ceremonies would serve either her, or her uncle, —especially the old fellow,—so what could I do?"

"Ah," replied the old man, "you're a blessed bird—two wives at your time of life ; an escape

* Be transported.

from the gallows ; and the blood-money of one man's life !—you promise well. But tell me ; what brings you to *this* neighbourhood ? Nothing good, I know ;—but still what is it ?”

“ That's what no man living shall ever know from me ; but in general, I may say to you, who know so much of me, that there is a conspiracy abroad against the welfare and happiness of the people.”

“ Of the people ! And who in the name of heaven is at the head of it, or at the bottom of it ; for that's a betther word ?”

“ I may tell you that too ;—well then, the people themselves.”

“ Hut, man,—don't pass that on me ; the people are'nt fools.”

“ Are they not ? well perhaps so ; but in the mean time, *we* do not find them philosophers.”

“ I would rather you'd spake plainer, James ;—I'm not *up* to you.”

“ I know that ; but as to what the conspiracy is, I don't think it will ever come to light. It is enough for us, that the people are very credulous and easily led ; we, consequently, knowing that, are able to make them our dupes, whilst they think that they are about to work wonders.”

“ And what end have you in view by all this ?”

“ What object ? why, is it nothing to be able to say, that the Irish are a disaffected, riotous, unscrupulous, and blood-thirsty people, whom common laws cannot restrain ? Is it nothing to give the country a bad name, and to take such

measures as may keep *it* up ;—that is, the *bad name* I mean?”

“ But listen, James, and answer me truly ;—is this a system that’s goin’ on now ?”

“ Yes ; and which will be kept alive by the enemies of the people for years ; we manage in such a way, that some individual victim is first pitched upon ; we then initiate him, but under a solemn seal of secrecy ; then furnish him with all that is necessary for our purpose,—even with arguments, when he seems to stand in need of them. He then goes abroad, furnished with his arguments, and his papers, and in a very short time, he is, without being at all in the secret, one of our most useful agents, as are all those to whom he communicates the infection.”

“ But, James, answer me one thing ; what is this conspiracy that you speak of ;—and what are *you* in it ; that is, what rank do you hold in it ?”

“ The origin of this conspiracy against the people, will not, I think, be easily come at ; and for this reason, because it seems to clothe itself with the prejudices of the people themselves. How then can they suspect it to be unfriendly to their own interests ? We make them, I say, our own agents, and I believe in my soul, that if any man told them tomorrow, that their prejudices were used by their enemies, in this way, against themselves, they would not believe him ; so admirably are we working the system.”

“ But, as I asked before, what are you James

in this system ;—or rather, in the spreading of this system ?”

“ Whisper, uncle, and I will tell you :—I AM AN EMISSARY.”

“ And what is that, James ?”

“ A person that is sent out to do a particular thing.”

“ And James, may I ask, who sent you ?”

“ You may, but that is what neither you nor any other person shall ever know. I am not one of those, that would cut their own throats to oblige another. As it is, perhaps, I have gone farther than I ought ;—and, at all events, you are in possession of a sufficient number of my secrets.”

“ And you know mine ;—don’t you ? so far we’re aiquil.”

“ So far we are, I grant ; but now, there is one thing I wish you to do. If you see Ellen, tell her you have reason to know that I am not, nor have been, in this country during the last six months. You may say, you know a person who saw me in England. Put on a little mystery and she will believe you.”

“ And about the other ?”

“ As to her, *you* can’t interfere there, you know. She is ignorant of any connection between us. No, no,—I make too many doubles to give her a chance. I change my dress and my name as often as a play-actor ; but indeed, I like it. Its a devilish pleasant life, and full of fun, and adventure.”

"I know," said the old fellow, "that when one comes to be used to it, its not an easy thing to leave it off. If I was to settle down to one particular spot, I would soon kick the bucket. Do you intend to make a long stay here?"

"I don't know yet; until my task's accomplished; be that soon or late."

"You can't say where you'll go to from this?"

"Not exactly; but I believe to the county Leitrim; may be, I may meet you there."

"Well, now I must go; for I would n't wish we should be seen together; but wanst more I say agin, if you wish to keep a safe skin, leave the country, for you know you're far from bein' safe."

"Never mind that; but take care of yourself. The country folks are beginning to stir, so good by till we meet again."

"Ay, if we ever meet in *this* world."

"And if all that's said and read be true, we're pretty certain to meet in another,—where we won't run the risk of being frozen, at all events, ha, ha, ha!—Good by, I say. I must go and assume the tongue and character by which I pass here—that of Rody the Rover."

He sprung off the stone on which he had been standing, and with his usual light and easy gate, retraced his steps to the village.

"There you go," said the old fellow to himself, "and I'm not sure but I'll—well;" he paused a few moments, whilst he looked after him;—"it

would be only an act of justice," he continued ; " however, I'll think of it."

He then returned by the short path, up the side of the glen, and reached the house in which he had stopped for the night.

Rody the Rover was apparently but five-and-twenty years of age, or so ; although in reality, numbering about thirty. His dress, which was that of a country buck, consisted of a white castor hat ; a green silk neckerchief ; green sprigged waistcoat ; cassimere breeches ; white thread stockings, and " turned pumps." This was a showy and a taking garb, and designed altogether for the ladies, who are fond of gaudy colours. He took care, however, not to go overdressed, lest he might throw too great a distance between himself and the villagers. He confined himself, therefore, to a proper medium, just assuming as much smartness in his wardrobe, as established that degree of superiority over them, which he intended to claim and exercise, without giving offence. In a few days, his arrival in Ballybracken, created quite a sensation in a small way, and this was but natural, in a remote village such as it was. We know, however, that wherever there is human nature, there is also curiosity ; and wherever there is curiosity, women will be found peeping somewhere near the premises. On the occasion in question, the females of the village, were quite on the *qui vive* as to his history, pedigree, place of residence, and all the other particulars in which the sex feel interested.

"Who is that good-looking young man that stops in Brian M'Mahon's, can any body tell? Where is he from, and what is he doing here? —I wonder is he married?"

"I don't think he is, for he has not a married look."

"Well, dear me, who, or what is he at all, can any one tell?"

To all which, the same reply was given:—
"Nobody knows."

Rody, for two or three days after his domestication with the M'Mahons, appeared to have altogether changed his natural character. He was silent, meditative, and gloomy; sometimes he sighed deeply, and occasionally appeared to experience great distress. At intervals, however, he seemed to be borne away by the force of his vivacious temperament, and to forget every thing disagreeable. These contrasts, whilst they deepened the mystery that was about him, also occasioned a much stronger sympathy to be felt for his position. The benevolent spirit of Brian M'Mahon, was deeply interested in his apparent sufferings; and his kind hearted wife treated him as if he had been a son just returned after a long absence.

"I'm sorry to see you so much cast down," said the good man; "an' I hope there's nothing so very bad in your case as to make you fret the way you do. Don't, however, let the notion that you are any trouble to us, give you uneasiness, bekaise, we treat you jist as we'd wish our

own son to be treated in a strange place."

"Sure, after all, its but natural for him to be cast down," observed his wife; "do you think that Tom here, if he was placed as the poor boy is, far from his own, could be aisy in his mind, or avoid frettin'? Still, acushla, keep your heart up, for sure if a warm welcome can be of any service to you—you have it. Is your mother livin'?"

"Not since I was a gorson," replied Rody, once more gliding into the dialect of the people.

"God pity you then, my poor young man," she returned, "for now, in your distress, you don't know what a mother's tenderness an' love is."

"Tut," said Tom, "divil a thing ails him, mother, only frettin' afther his sweetheart."

"Well, an' even that is n't unraisonable, if he's fond of her," she replied.

Rody sighed deeply, and said, as he glanced at Alice, "I left no sweetheart behind me, to fret afther, or to fret for me; at laist none that I know."

"May be he's married," observed Brian, "an' that it's the wife he's frettin' afther. Are you single or double, young man?"

"The pleasure of bein' double is yet before me," he replied, "and a pleasure it must be to sich as can marry them they wish."

This was accompanied by another rapid but furtive glance at Alice, who was by no means so simple as not to understand both the glance and the allusion perfectly. She felt slightly em-

barrassed, it is true; but as such compliments are very frequent in rustic life, she attached no peculiar importance to it.

"At all events," said Mrs. M'Mahon, "so far as anything we can do for you goes, let your mind be aisy; you're welcome to stay wid us till you get your business settled, and I hope that may be to your satisfaction."

"I need n't say," he replied, "that I am thankful for your kindness,—for how can I ever forget it? but to tell you the truth," he added, with a third glance at Alice, equally significant, "I am sorry—and I fear I may have raison to be sorry, that ever I came to this neighbourhood at all."

"To this neighbourhood!" exclaimed Brian; "arra, how is that?"

"In the first place," he replied, "I have a large farm, thank God, at a cheap rent too, and you know at this saison of the year, it does n't do for a man to be away from his business—nor indeed at any saison."

"Well," said M'Mahon, "you're right there sure enough."

"Ay," added Mrs. M'Mahon, "and its creditable to him to spake as he does, bekaise it shows a thrifty mind, along wid all."

"But," asked Tom, "how to *this* neighbourhood, more than any other?"

He sighed again, and stole another and more tender glance still at Alice, but only replied:—"as to that, it's a thing I can't for the present

“speak of ; but I hope the day will soon come, when I both may and can. All I can say is, that, somehow, I am not happy.”

“Tut,” said Brian, “you make too much entirely of the scrape you ’re in,—an’ think too much about it ;—come, man, keep your heart up, for frettin’’s but bad kitchen to your meat,—ha, ha, ha !”

Young M’Mahon, who was generosity itself, became so much attached to him, that ere the lapse of a week, no two could be more intimate. They made each other the depositaries of their mutual secrets ; went out and in together, and in fact, were inseparable. Tom’s opinion of him amounted to admiration itself ; and indeed, this is scarcely to be wondered at, for such was Rody’s conduct, both as to religion and morals, that a much more experienced and acute observer than Tom, might have fallen into the same impression.

On the very first night, for instance, which he spent under the hospitable roof of Brian M’Mahon, he evinced a very gratifying proof of piety.

“You ’ll excuse me a trifle,” he said, addressing Tom, who, in the novelty of the scene, had forgotten to say his prayers before going to bed ; “but the truth is, that I’ve made it a rule, ever since I had any sinse at all, to offer up a few prayers every night and mornin’. It takes up but little time, you know, an’ is sure to bring down a blessin’ upon one, sooner or later : an’ if

we 're not rewarded in this world, sure we will in the next."

Upon other occasions, if Tom happened to let fly an oath, which was sometimes the case, Rody was certain, in an easy cheerful way, replete with affection and good humour, to check him for it; adding, "you know its a bad and sinful habit, Tom, and if you accustom yourself to lay it aside, you will never miss it."

We need scarcely say, that these instances of piety and morality were communicated by Tom to his family, with a kind of pride, and that they succeeded in creating a degree of respect for the Rover, such as our readers, knowing as they do, the upright principles of that family, may easily understand.

The Rover's tact was indeed admirable, and his conduct perfectly consistent. Whilst under M'Mahon's roof, for instance, he was, as we have said, silent and depressed; but no sooner did he go abroad, and mingle with the young people of the village, than he forgot all his melancholy, and once more assumed the good humoured gaiety of what appeared to be his natural character.

"As for my little devotions, Tom," said he, "you see they don't prevent me from bein' pleasant now an' then; but indeed, I 'm naturally light hearted, an' its only when I think of things that sometimes trouble me, an' fret about my farm, that I get any way down hearted; still, as regards my little devotions, I don't wish the

world to know any thing about *them*. Our neighbours here would scarcely believe that a *Brinoge* like me ever thinks of a prayer ; but that's only another proof that we ought never to judge by appearances."

As yet, however, the Rover had studiously avoided referring to any thing whatever connected with his mission ; at the same time, Tom M'Mahon could observe, that he fixed his eye on him from time to time, with a long and steady gaze, in which there appeared a mingled expression of benevolence and interest. Sometimes, too, he would appear on the point of communicating to him some matter of importance, but he always stopped short and checked himself, as if against his will, though clearly anxious to make the communication. This set his companion's mind agoing ; his curiosity was excited, and a new interest awakened, which furnished him with food for speculation, morning, noon, and night. This was precisely what the Rover wanted ; his design being to cause the first overture for confidence on the subject of his curiosity, or speculation, to proceed from M'Mahon himself. This would make his communications to him on the desired subject appear perfectly natural, as being made altogether at his own solicitation ; a circumstance which must necessarily relieve him from all suspicion of design, in what he proposed to do. Such was the relative situation of both parties when Sunday arrived ; and as it was the first since his appearance in the village, he se-

lected the Chapel green, as the scene where he wished to distinguish himself; his object being, to excite as much interest amongst the young men of the parish as possible, and to create for himself a little circle of fame, that might make him at least the general theme of conversation among them. For this he was admirably adapted. Time had just knit and improved his figure, which was naturally good, to the utmost; and his evident relish for banter with the people had sharpened and improved his wit, and gave to his humour all the zest which is communicated by a varied vocabulary of standard aphorisms, which, while they seem to be the result of invention, are in reality only an act of memory. As might be expected, his success on the Chapel green was complete; the crowd about him were in roars of laughter at his jokes and anecdotes; one of which we shall relate, in order to show our readers how dexterously he could suit them to the time, place, and occasion.

“There lived,” said he, “near the town of Balcaddhan, a fool, or a kind of half-witted fellow, between knave and fool, by name Jemmy Bellew. Now Jemmy, you must know, was a great man for attendin’ all public places where there was any fun goin’ forrid. Dances, weddins, races, fairs, and markets, war all sartin’ to have Jemmy in attendance; but above all, nothin’ in life plaised him half so much as the ‘Walk-Day’ of the Orangemen,—the bloody villains; but

never mind, their real day is comin',—*nabocklish*!—eh? ha, ha, ha! no faith, the day's not far, when we 'll furnish their colours for them; that is, you see, if we find the *orange*, we 'll make them find the *blue*, an' to that we 'll keep them; *blue* enough they 'll look before we 're done wid them;—eh? ha, ha, ha!"

We may as well observe here, that he always led the laugh at his own jokes, knowing very well, we presume, the influence which a successful and contagious laugh is certain to have over others, on similar occasions.

"Well," he proceeded, "as I was sayin'; it happened that one Walk-Day, Jemmy was in great glee, along wid the Orangemen, decked out in bits of ribbons and orange-lilies, and as proud out of them, the crature, as a pay-cock. When the procession was over, they all met, or at any rate the knobs among them did, in the head inn of Balscaddhan, that was kept by a man who was related, *on the wrong side*, to the owner of the town. The gentleman, to tell the truth, was Bill Cook's father, for that was the Inn-keeper's name—and a very good Bill he was, all but *the stamp*—you persave,—eh? ha, ha, ha! So begad, when they were assembled in the dinin'-room, one of them spies Jemmy out of the windy, an' risin' it up, he calls him in; here's Jemmy Bellew, said he, an' we must take a piece of fun out of him. Accordingly Jemmy came in. "Well, Mr. Bellew," says he, "I hope your Reverence is well."

"I'll be betther when I get my dinner," says Jemmy, "an your honour will be worse."

"How is that, Jemmy?"

"Why," says the fool, "I'll ait my dinner an' keep sober; but you 'll ait your dinner, an' get dhrunk."

"So this brought the laugh against ould Cook, an' Jemmy was clapped on the back for the answer."

"Come, Mr. Bellew," said Cook agin, "as you 're our Grand Chaplain to day, I think its but right you should say a Mass for us."

"Have you the robes for me," axed Jemmy, "for you know I can't say Mass widout the robes."

"And you must have them, Jemmy," says Cook; "here they are," says he, handin' him his beautiful silk scarf and apron, "clap these about you, and pelt us off a Mass as fast as you can."

"You must all come to the kitchen then," says Jemmy, "for I could n't say Mass unless there's a fire."

"Well an' good, they were on for a spree at all events, and in a right good vein for it, you see, bekaise the most o' them war half drunk at the time."

"But," says Jemmy, "I'll not say Mass unless you promise to make me a collection, an' you'll have a charity sarmon for your money."

"Bravo," they shouted, "well done Jemmy; you must have the collection;—so, come now an'

show us what a Mass is, an' the collection you shall have."

"Very well, down they went to the kitchen, where there was a rousin' fire, wid a big pot on it, and in the pot a thunderin' lump of corn-beef that was boilin' for their dinner; across the mouth of the pot there was lyin' a ladle that would hould, at laist, half-a-gallon."

"Now, gintlemen," says Jemmy, "I hope you'll attind to your devotions in a becomin' manner,—especially if you wish to have the proper benefit of my prayers;—*as I hope you will,*" says he, very soberly. 'He then put on the silk scarf and apron that Cooke had given him, and made as if he was goin' through Mass. The fellows enjoyed all this, you may be sure, an wor in great glory, when Jemmy turns round, and says, "now, gintlemen, for the collection?"'

"What collection, you rascal?" says Cooke, "we promised you no collection.—What piece of knavery is this?"

"Very well, gintlemen," says Jemmy; "at all evints, I must finish Mass, an' you know I can't do that widout givin' yez my blessin', an' a sprinklin' o' the holy water." He accordingly seized the big ladle, an' before you could wink, had the villains a most scalded to death wid the boilin' broth; so that such a Walk-Day of torture an' agony the rascals never put in from that to this. Their faces, and hands, and bodies, were blistered in such a way, that you 'd hardly

know a man o' them for a fortnight after. As the last batch was makin' off:—"gentlemen," says Jemmy, as he discharged the ladle on them, "won't you wait till I finish Mass, an' give you a little more o' the holy wather;—eh? ha, ha, ha!" When they were gone, he tuck off the silk scarf an' apron, an' looks at them: "By Johnny Mack," says he, for that was his oath, "by Johnny Mack, I think you want a touch o' the holy wather as much as your masther;" and wid that he dips them both in the pot, and left them there to be purified. "There you are," says Jemmy, "King William an' all, an' by my sowl," says he; "its long since your Majesty* got a belly-full of corn-beef, at all events: eh?—ha, ha, ha!"

In short, the comic cut of his face, and the easy drollery of his winks and gestures were such as few could resist. So deeply were these felt by a people who are naturally humorous, that even during the performance of Mass, there were many who, on thinking of them, could not prevent themselves from allowing them to mingle with their devotions.

Our Rover now deemed it right to commence operations a little more decidedly; although his advances were still made with due caution. Acting with all the skill of an intelligent husbandman, he set about preparing the soil, before he should

* There was generally a picture of William the Third on the Orange scarfs, or aprons.

put down the crop. Accordingly our readers are not to suppose, that he confined himself, or the preparations necessary for his system, to the mere village of Ballybracken.—No such thing. He shot out to different parts of the parish; radiated wherever fun was to be had, or mirth created; even to a distance of several miles. Dances began to multiply; wakes were more numerously attended; hurling, and foot-ball matches were made, and card-playing introduced. Mutton, and loaves, and whiskey, were gambled for at spoil-five, or raffled for with dice. In short, such a series of social amusements were got up, as were calculated, first, to corrupt the moral principles, and bring them to the most appropriate condition for the reception of crime; and secondly, with a view of showing off his own accomplishments. His popularity accordingly increased astonishingly.

In a short time the whole parish rang with the fame of Rody the Rover, for he had publicly assumed, and was proud of the name; knowing, that it was a passport to their good feeling and hospitality. In the mean time, the calm and quiet spirit of the whole country began to change. Rody was the best dancer that ever was seen in the place; no such singer existed; nor had ever any man such a variety of seditious and white-boy songs. He could leap one-and-twenty feet backwards and forwards; had beaten long George Sharpe at his favorite game on the cards; managed and rode young Tom Cane's colt, Satan

the Second, that nobody could approach or ride but his groom; and boxed the Connaughtman, at Bob Bailey's wake, better than long Sam Soolaghan, that was never beaten at it before. The truth is, there was no end to his accomplishments, and no limits to the celebrity they gained him in that and the neighbouring parishes, where his fame was absolutely lost in the distance.

Of course, the young people of both sexes burned to get a sight of this far-famed, admirable Chrichton of humble life, and to witness his feats and prowess. The young women, hearing his praises so loudly and incessantly sounded by their brethren, thought of him by day, and dreamt of him by night; and many of them, on the principle of "Neal Malone," fell in love with him beforehand, in order to save time and trouble, when they should see him. The consequence was, that dances and other meetings of amusement, multiplied in a septuple ratio; to which the young folks, male and female, flocked from unprecedented distances, all for the sake of getting "the full of their eye," as the phrase is, of the celebrated Rody the Rover.

And yet, such is the generous confidence of the misrepresented Irish, that whilst this man was, in fact, the topic of general conversation, those who admired him so much knew no earthly circumstance connected with him, except, as they believed, "that the poor boy was in trouble;" but we mostly find, that those who have experienced most suffering themselves, are the first to sympathize with it in others.

Rody felt that every thing was now ripe for his project. He had quietly introduced, or rather caused to be introduced, without taking a direct or open part in them himself, gambling and drinking, and night dances, or rustic balls, at which whiskey was given to the females, as well as to the men. Having thus, as it were, laid the foundation of his system, he felt that the time had come for beginning to erect the superstructure. He unquestionably was, in point of situation and character, in an excellent condition to set about it. Whilst secretly, but in the *apparent* spirit of harmless fun and amusement, he left scarcely anything undone to injure their morals, he yet contrived by his conduct in M'Mahon's family, to sustain a high reputation for morality and religion ; the circumstance of his private attention to devotion was soon known through the whole parish. This not only caused them to respect, as well as to admire him, but it also completely disarmed them of those suspicions, which are sometimes attached to strangers, who attempt to mingle themselves with the business or amusements of the people.

One Sunday morning, a little after breakfast, Rody and Tom M'Mahon were sitting, one on each side of the hearth, the former engaged in reading the "Seven Penitential Psalms," with much apparent devotion. Having concluded this pious exercise, he gazed in his usual mysterious manner upon his companion, and appeared to feel as if a matter of considerable importance and difficulty occupied his mind, and that this

matter, whatever it meant, was in some degree connected with young M'Mahon. At length he drew a long breath, and exclaimed, evidently in a mood of abstraction :—

“I will,—in the name of goodness, and of our parsecuted counthry,—I will—for if any one deserves it, *he* does.”

Ha, ha, ha!—What in the name o' wondher are you spakin' about?” asked M'Mahon, moved to mirth by his obvious absence of mind ;—“parsecuted counthry! Parsecuted or not, you have it all to yourself, at any rate.”

“All what?” replied Rody, “what do you mane Tom? Who's talkin' about parsecuted counthry?” and he looked at him with a face of wonder which would deceive any man. Tom then explained to him the cause of his mirth, and repeated the words he had just, in his opinion, so unconsciously uttered. Rody again drew a long breath, and after a considerable pause, exclaimed, with his forefinger still in the prayer-book ; “ah, Tom, its aisy to be a friend to that poor parsecuted counthry ; but then its not every man that 's worthy to be so.”

“How is that ?” said the other ; “I don't well undherstand that.”

“I know you don't,” replied the Rover, “an' the more 's the pity. However, this is no place for what I want to say to you. Come and take a walk up the river. I think,” he whispered, so as not to be heard by any of the family,—“I think the time 's come for me to speak out to *you*;

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but I can't say as much for any one else in the neighbourhood."

"Very well," replied Tom, "with all my heart. Its a glorious mornin', at all events, the Lord be praised !"

Rody, accordingly, put the Manual in his pocket, and accompanied by his unsuspecting companion, proceeded up the mountain river, in order to take the first cautious and characteristic steps in opening his mission.

Every one knows and has felt the singular exhilaration of spirits which the cloudless morning of a summer Sabbath pours into the heart. The light of heaven on such a morning is more effulgent than on any other, because it is reflected from the soul which is now kindled with gratitude to that Being who bestowed upon him such a blessed respite from labour and from care. This delightful sensation enrobes all nature in a serener lustre ; the birds sing more sweetly ; the music of the streams is full of a diviner melody ; and the sunny breeze bears a happiness to man that borrows additional fulness from the day. The fields are greener, and the trees, as they rustle to the warm winds, murmur forth a song which ever and anon dies away on the enchanted ear, like the far gone music of our early life, filling the soul at once with happiness and sorrow. On such a morning as this, we say, our Missionary and his companion took their way along the devious windings of the mountain river. It

was one of those delightful streams that pass, now in a slow but limpid course through the green meadows, and again over the rocky bed of the wild and wooded glen; sometimes stealing out between clear green banks, and again hiding itself, as it were, under the meeting foliage of the hanging wild-wood that grew in tangled webs across it, leaving its very existence beneath them unknown, unless for the ceaseless melody of its own voice. The swallows that flew about them twittered with peculiar glee, and skimmed the open bends of the little stream, as if they felt fresh happiness; and the fish leaped out of the water, as if they, too, participated in this weekly jubilee of nature. At length the two companions reached a quiet dell about a mile up the river, in the centre of which rose a little green eminence, or mount, smooth and grassy, which commanded a sweet stretch of wild but beautiful scenery down the river. Here they sat, and our worthy Rover commenced the conversation which follows:—

“Now Tom M'Mahon,” he began, “I am about to ax you a solemn question—do you love your country?”

“Do I love my country? Why, to be sure I do.”

“I ax agin do you love your country? Do you love your country, so as that you would lay down your life for it—that you would die for it?”

“I don't know *that*,” replied M'Mahon; “but

I'll tell you what I know and feel too—that I would lay down my life for my *religion*."

"*I'm* a fool," said the Rover, with a burst of sudden vexation; "I'm a fool—it's religion I ought to a' said; for, indeed, it was religion I meant. However, you know they're the same at the long run. Well, you would lay down your life for your religion? You say that solemnly?"

"I do, as solemnly as a man can say it; an' I'd look on myself as a disgrace to my faith, if I'd refuse to shed the last dhrop o' my blood for it."

"You would hate a man that could betray that faith, or, undher any pretence at all, that could injure it, or wish to injure it?"

This was followed, on the part of M'Mahon, by a look that flashed with indignation and scorn.

"What makes you ax me sich a question as *that*?" he inquired; who wouldn't hate any scoundrel or traithor that could betray his faith or his counthry? Ha! that's quare enough, indeed. You wouldn't have me fall in love wid sich a villain?"

Rody laughed, but almost immediately relapsed into a mood that still indicated some internal struggle, as well as deep reflection. His countenance at length cleared: he looked upon M'Mahon with an eye which appeared to be full of candour and confidence, and then spoke as follows:—

"My mind is made up at last, Tom; I'm now goin' to trust you, and to put you in a way of sarvin' your country, and your religion too."

"Well," replied Tom, "I can only say, that whatever trust you place in me will be well kept. If I do any thing mane or dishonest, I'm the first of the family that ever did so."

"I believe that," replied the Rover; "if I didn't think so, I wouldn't be here this minute, ready and willin' to show you how you can sarve both."

"Well, but how is that?" asked Tom, a good deal puzzled as to what Rody was aiming at; "don't keep me too long in the dark."

"We have spirits hard at work for us in high places—at head quarthers; an' all they want is to have *us* workin' for *them*—and you know one good turn desarves another."

"What do you mane by head quarthers?"

"That's what I can't tell you now; all I can say is, that our friends is makin' preparations to set our counthry an' our religion free; an' that's a work that every man that loves both must join in, or, at any rate, be ready for, when the time comes."

"But about head quarthers—who are they that's workin' for us at head quarthers?"

"You're not *fit* to know that yet," replied Rody; "but hould—I'm goin' too far," he added, pulling out his prayer book; "before I mention any thing else about this great business, I must swear you to saicresy. Are you willin' now, for the sake of your religion an' your counthry, to swear on this book of God, that to no human bein' will you ever mention, upon this business,

the name of the man that's now spakin' to you, or to give any clue whatsoever that might discover him."

"I'm altogether in the dark in this," said M'Mahon ; "how do I know whether I ought to do that or not?"

"That's a very natural question," said the Rover ; "but sure, so far as that goes, you're not worse off, nor so bad, even, as a Free Mason. Every man must swear to saicresy at first, otherwise, afther hearin' what he has to consale, he might refuse to swear at all, and then he'd get the saicret. No, no ; that 'ud never do. I'll now say the words, and you must judge for yourself whether you'll swear to them or not :—'I do swear, in the presence of Almighty God, that I will always consale, and never will revale, either part or parts of what is to be privately communicated to me, until I shall be authorised so to do by the proper authorities ; that I will neither write it, nor indite it, stamp, stain, or engrave it, nor cause it to be done on paper, parchment, leaf, bark, stick, stone, or any thing, so that it may be known ; and that I will never mention the name of Roderick O'Neill to any person whatsoever, in any way that might lead to his discovery, as the man that instructed me in the secrets of what I am about to know—So help me God.' Now," proceeded the Rover, "you can judge for yourself ; if you love your creed and your counthry, you'll do as others do ; but if you're any way cowardly, you'll refuse it."

"Cowardly!" repeated Tom, with a smile of scorn. "I don't think there's much cowardly blood in my veins. Come, then, at any rate, I can't be worse off than another. Go over the oath again, and I'll swear it."

Rody complied with this, and in a few minutes the oath of secresy—that is, the oath which prevented himself from being, by any possibility, traced in the villany he then and there originated—was deliberately taken by M'Mahon, who thus unconsciously put himself into the meshes which a veiled traitor to both his creed and country was, under their names, and upon the plea of their very authority, drawing round him.

"Now," proceeded our Emissary, "there's only the first step taken yet; but we must take the real one at wanst. I'm commissioned to place you in a station of authority that ought to make any man proud."

"But now that I'm sworn to saicresy," observed M'Mahon, "surely you can have no objection to let me hear who it was that commissioned you."

"That's more than I dare do," replied Rody, "as you will soon come to know. You must rise high up by degrees, before you can come to the knowledge of *that*. Don't you know we're surrounded by enemies that 'ud give the blood from their veins to get a knowledge of what you wish. That would knock all our schemes on the head, an' then where would we be? No, no; a man must be high up, an' well worthy of bein' trusted, before he can know the names of them that's

workin' for us at head quarters. Ay, an' I'll tell you more—the three great men that's at the bottom of it all, are scarce known at all."

"I suppose O'Connell's one of them," said Tom, musingly, rather than by way of inquiry.

Nothing on earth could surpass the indescribable affectation of profound mystery which the Rover assumed at this observation ; his features settled themselves into a grave and solemn cast, to which was added an expression of severe reproof, conveyed by the close pressure of his lips, the knit brows, and the menacing shake of the head ; all of which, when taken together, seemed to say—"Sir, you know not what you speak ; beware of such questions ; you are upon dangerous ground ; and it is nothing but the state of utter darkness in which you at present live, which prevents you from perceiving the injury you might inflict upon the cause by using such language."

Such was the significant reproof that might be inferred from his looks : as for words, he uttered none. The only reply given, consisted in raising his hand, so as to intimate immediate silence, and giving M'Mahon a look of such startling import, as at once made him feel that he had spoken what was wrong ; whilst, at the same time, the impression left on him, as regarding the accuracy of his surmise, unquestionably was, that O'Connell guided and originated the whole mystery, whatever it was ; so admirably qualified was this man to play the part he had undertaken.

After two or three minutes' silence, during which, he seemed striving, as it were, to collect himself, and poor Tom found time to feel the extent of the error he had just committed, he once more resumed the discourse:—

“Now, Tom,” said he, “we must go on. You are sworn to saicresy, as is proper; the next thing is the *Oath of the body*.”

“Ay, but what body?”

“Why, death alive, man, sure you can't be allowed to know any thing farther about it till the oath is taken. Afther that, you'll be tould all that you *ought to know* in the beginnin'. This is the oath; I'll repate it at my aise, an' you can say the words afther me as you did awhile agoe—

“‘I, Thomas M'Mahon, with the sign of the cross, do declare and promise, in the name, and through the assistance, of the Blessed Trinity, that I will keep inviolable all secrets of this Fraternal Society, from all but those whom I know or believe to be regular members of the same, and bound by the same solemn ties.

“‘1st—I declare and profess, without any compulsion, allegiance to his present Majesty King George the Third, King of Great Britain and Ireland.

“‘2nd—That I will be true to the principles of this Society, dedicated to St. Patrick, the holy Patron of Ireland, in all things lawful, and not otherwise.

“‘3rd—That I will duly and regularly attend,

on the shortest possible notice, at any hour, whether by day or night, to perform, without fail or inquiry, such commands as my superior or superiors may lay upon me, under whatever penalty he or they may inflict for my neglecting the same.

“ ‘ 4th—I will not deliberately or willingly provoke, challenge, or strike, any of my brethren, knowing him to be such. If he or they should be ill spoken of, ill used, or otherwise treated unjustly, I will, according to circumstances, and the best of my judgment, espouse his cause, give him the earliest information, and aid him with my friendship when in distress.

“ ‘ 5th—I also declare and promise, that I will not admit or propose a Protestant or heretic of any description as a member of our Fraternal Society, knowing him to be such.

“ ‘ 6th—That whether in fair or market, in town or country, I will always give the preference in dealing to those who are attached to our National Cause, and that I will not deal with a Protestant or heretic, so long as I can deal with one of my own faith upon equal terms.

“ ‘ 7th—That I will not withdraw myself from this Society without stating my reasons for the same, and giving due notice to my Superior, or Superiors ; and that I will not, without permission, join any other society of different principles, or denominations, under penalty of God’s judgment ; and whatever punishment may be inflicted on me,—not including in these, Trade

Societies, or the profession of a soldier or sailor.

“ ‘ 8th.—That I will aid a brother in distress, or danger by my person and council, as far as in me lies ; and that I will not refuse to subscribe money according to my means, for the general or particular purposes of this, our Fraternal Society.

“ ‘ 9th.—That I will not, under the penalty of my Superiors, give evidence in any court of Law or Justice against a brother, when prosecuted by an Orangeman or heretic ; and that I will aid in his defence by every way in my power.

“ ‘ 10th.—That when taking refuge in the house of a brother, or of any person friendly to our National Cause, I will not have improper intercourse or foul freedom with his sister, daughter, wife, or cousin, and thus give cause of scandal to our Society.

“ ‘ Having made the above solemn Declaration and promise, of my own free will and accord, I swear true and real allegiance to the cause of Ireland only ;—praying that God may assist me in my endeavors to fulfil the same ;—that he may protect me and prosper our Society, and grant us to live and die in a state of Grace !—Amen.’ ”

When this part of the ceremony was concluded, Rody put his hand, or rather his finger and thumb, into a secret pocket, and extracting therefrom two small pieces of ribbon, he placed them in M'Mahon's hands ; he then took out of another secret pocket a folded paper, which he also committed to his keeping.

"In this paper," said he, "you have a copy of the oath you have just taken. The two ribbons are to be two signs that will guide you—the *green* one is for Ireland and friendship, an' the *red* one for revenge an' blood : the one is for your friends—the other for your enemies. There is nothing now remainin' but to give you the passwords, the signs, and the grips ; and here they are." He then instructed him with reference to these, and proceeded, "you are now, Thomas M'Mahon, a true subject of them that are friends to Ireland ; and—give me your hand—there you stand, a lawfully made Ribbonman—an Article Bearer, and Captain of fifty men ! Ireland for ever !"

"Why, then, Ireland for ever !" said M'Mahon, laughing in accordance with the glee of the other. His laughter, however, was hollow and not mirthful. In spite of the honours he had just received, he felt as if that consciousness of security, which honesty and ignorance of unlawful things always produce, had, somehow, departed from him.

"And so," said he, "I am a captain of Ribbonmen ! but where, in the name o' goodness, is my corps ? Where is my fifty men ?"

"It's your own business *now*," replied Rody, "to find them ; which you are to do, by swearin' them *in*, as I have sworn yourself."

Young M'Mahon, moved by a very natural curiosity, then expressed an anxiety to know more about a system to which he now belonged, and

with the principles of which he was personally identified; but here he was once more met by mysterious and oracular hints, to the effect, that for the present he should not attempt to know too much—that the knowledge must reach him only by degrees, and according as his conduct and activity in advancing the interests of the system entitled him to it—and, above all things, it was impressed upon him, that the most important service that could be rendered to his faith and his country, was, by spreading that system as widely as possible, and attaching as many members to it as he could.

Having thus safely, and with undeniable ability, introduced his evil principles into that part of the country, through the unsuspecting but manly simplicity of Thomas M'Mahon, and the honest attachment which he felt for his religion and his country; he secretly congratulated himself upon the skill with which he had accomplished the task he undertook to perform.

So far, it is true, he had managed the matter admirably, but notwithstanding his success, he felt that there was before him an undertaking of a different nature, in which he felt a much deeper, because a still more personal interest, than he did in the success of the secret and illegal system which he had just set a going.

It is not easy to give anything like a correct analysis of what Tom M'Mahon felt, on finding himself invested with this mysterious description

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of authority. To a person placed in his circumstances of life, with warm and generous feelings, limited knowledge, a consciousness of belonging to a degraded church, and to a party deprived of their civil rights ; with a traditionary and habitual attachment also to his religion, as well for its own sake, as because it was under ban ; to such a person, we say, so placed, it is not to be supposed, that an office, even in the remotest degree connected with any association of great but nameless leaders, that was calculated to aid in realizing, whether directly or indirectly, those dreams of civil and religious freedom, that were, and still are, so strongly cherished by the people, should bestow upon him such magnified notions of importance, as would, not only flatter his pride, and awake his ambition, but also give him the strongest impulses to action. This indeed, was precisely the course that had been designed for him, and for such as resembled him ; that is to say, a course that would, whilst it kept them ignorant of any definite object, drive them forward, by blind and infatuated impulses, into acts of such senseless and illegal violence, as would not only bring themselves to ruin and destruction, but furnish their enemies with a standing argument against their fitness for civil or religious liberty ; and justify cases of individual oppression, under the plausible pretext of vindicating the law. In such a position was Thomas M'Mahon now placed ; the blind, but unsuspecting instrument of a profligate and unprincipled adventurer,

whose vile wages were derived from the turbulence of civil strife, and the crimes which resulted from the corruption of an unreflecting people.

It was on the second or third morning after this, that Rody, whilst reading, as he often did before breakfast, the "Seven Penitential Psalms," seated in the chimney corner, having concluded their perusal, closed the book, and sighed deeply. Alice M'Mahon was engaged in preparing breakfast, Tom and the father having been as usual at their daily employment in the mines. We say he sighed deeply, and as was his custom, accompanied the inspiration by a long look of tenderness and sorrow. The unsuspecting girl who associated these evidences of suffering with impressions of a religious nature, looked upon them at first, rather as indications of contrition, than of any other feeling. Ultimately, however, they became too significant to be misunderstood. On every occasion, when he could do so without being observed, his eyes were fixed upon her with the same long gaze of deep regret, mixed mostly with admiration, but always terminating as we have said, with profound sighs. Alice, who was no fool, could impose on herself no longer, nor doubt the cause of all this. She was not insensible to her own beauty, nor to the symmetry of her tall, and exquisite figure; and it was not by any means unnatural, she thought, that a handsome young fellow, living in the same house with her, should experience the fate of many other young men in the neighbourhood,

who had felt the force of her charms. In fact, she could no longer mistake the matter. It was too clear, and she only wondered, that she had not perceived it from the beginning. Now, to those who are acquainted with love, it is scarcely necessary to say, that there is nothing in life ever feeds its flame, or rather creates the passion, more than the consciousness that you *are* beloved. This, under almost any circumstances, is certain to kindle a corresponding affection, especially where the object is handsome, and there exists no pre-engagement of the heart. In the case of a young girl it is as a great sacrifice offered up to her self-love and vanity, and she feels gratified by a consciousness that the individual in question, has selected her in preference to any other, as the object of his affection. Be this however, as it may, Alice M'Mahon, by continually dwelling upon the Rover's secret attachment to her, began to find that an interest for him was awakening in her own heart. Sometimes he caught her eyes furtively fixed upon him, and occasionally he could also hear a low sigh, on her part, we must say, breathed unconsciously. Nor was this all ; in the course of a short time, he could perceive that the eye which on these occasions was usually timid and downcast, would after a slight struggle be raised to meet his ; but with so rapid and trembling a glance, that were it not for the blush which accompanied it, the vainest man could hardly flatter himself that it intimated affection. Rody, how-

ever was an adept, and knew by the small, but transient flush of meaning, which the conscious soul shot into it as her own signal, that Alice's heart was touched. But indeed, this is not at all to be wondered at. Rody's appearance at all places of amusement, was sure to be hailed with delight. If he came to wedding, wake, or dance, a buzz immediately went through the people, and "here's Rody the Rover," was immediately whispered about; "ay, that handsome young man, with the Caroline hat, and green waistcoat, is Rody the Rover!" All eyes were instantly turned on him, he was examined, viewed, looked at, by the young with the eager gaze of credulous admiration, that proceeds from those who will take anything they *wish* to believe on trust; and by the old, with the cautious scrutiny that weighs and deliberates before it decides. At fairs and markets he was followed by crowds; and at chapel, both before and after mass, proud was the young rustic, who could appear for the day as his selected and especial companion. Such, however, is human nature in every condition of life; every one is anxious to be known as the friend of a great man, and we know that all greatness is but comparative.

Bitter too, were the feuds, and jealousies, and heartburnings, that distracted the fair ones of the parish, about the gallant young Rover; and many a piece of pithy scandal did they charitably concoct against each other, in consequence of some fancied preference given by him

to one or other of the fair competitors. Oh! woman, woman,—but no matter ; you are yourselves the sufferers.

Rody, on the morning in question, closed his book, and after a few minutes silence, rose, and took a turn or two about the floor, apparently in a mood amounting almost to distress. At length he spoke.

“ Alley,” said he, “ I can bear this no longer.”

“ Bear what?” she asked ; “ something seems troublin’ you, sure enough.”

“ I’m unhappy in my mind, a’most ever since I came to Ballybracken. Sometimes I wish I had never come ; an’ agin, sometimes I would n’t for millions that I had not ; an’ what’s more Alley, you are the occasion of my unhappiness.”

“ Me !” she exclaimed, blushing deeply however ; “ why how in the wide world could I be the manes of your unhappiness ?”

“ You may very easily guess that,” he replied, “ don’t you know that it would be impossible for any one like me to be acquainted wid you, an’ not to get fond of you.”

Alice, who had felt that this declaration was coming, experienced considerable trepidation ; however, as it is not unusual with country girls under such circumstances, she strove to give the matter a jocular turn.

“ So afther all its only in love you are,” she replied, and yet her voice betrayed the interest she felt in his words, “ an’ me thought it was sorry for your sins you wor.”

"Why, thank goodness," he returned, "I can't say that I have any very great sins on my head; I know I'm far from what I ought to be; but still, I make it a point to hear Mass on Sundays an' Holidays, and to go to my duty every Christmas an' Aisther; and indeed, bad as I am, I would n't sleep aisy if I neglected to do so; or to say two or three words o' prayers, night an' mornin'. It keeps one's mind at aise, an' besides, one prospers the betther for it."

The serious view he took of what Alice intended as a jest, puzzled her sadly, whilst, at the same time, she could not withhold the tribute of her respect from a young man who held such principles—principles, she thought to herself, so very valuable in a husband.

"I didn't mane any disrespect," she said, "especially for readin' your prayer book; indeed, I had no harm in what I said."

"I know that," he replied; "but I wish you would think of what I said. Indeed, to make a short story of it, Ally dear, I love you beyond all belief; an' what's distressin' me is, that I'm afeerd you like somebody else."

"Me!" she exclaimed, quickly; but in a moment she felt that the quickness, as well as the tone, in which the exclamation was uttered, had almost betrayed her. "Well," she proceeded, recovering, or endeavouring to recover herself, "and what if I do?"

"That," he rejoined, "is what makes me so unhappy; for if I thought your heart was fixed

upon any other, I'd not have a day's pace; an' you may believe me when I say so."

"Say so," she returned, "say so, indeed! I'm afeered, Rody, you say every thing but your prayers, and you whistle them. There agin," she exclaimed, smiling, "one would think I'm laughin' at you for prayin', but, indeed, I am not. Sure you know it's a common sayin'."

"I know it is," he replied; "but, indeed, whether you're jokin' or not, I do often whistle hymn tunes; bekase, when one's whistlin' them, the mind's not apt to be on any harm—an' that's what makes me do it."

"Well," thought she, "it surely is not every day that one could meet with so pure-hearted a boy as he is."

"Is it thrue, or is it not?" he asked eagerly, or, rather, solemnly; "only let me know whether you like any one else or not?"

"An' suppose I don't," she replied, "surely it doesn't folly that I'm fond o' you?"

"Unfortunately for myself it doesn't; but still, it 'ud be a great relief to me to know whether I have any one against me or not."

"An' suppose you have?"

"Why, in that case, I'd not stay in the country," he replied.

She gave him a quick look, in which there was what might be termed a slight expression of contempt.

"So you'd run away," she said; "that 'ud

be manly too. If I was a man," she added, "I wouldn't run, at any rate."

"An' what 'ud you do?" he asked.

"Oh, that's another thing," she replied. "I only said what I would *not* do."

"You'd stand your ground," said he; "but where would be the use of that, if you found that the girl you loved was fond of another?"

"Ay, if I fou——" she caught herself ere the word had escaped, and added, "why, that's very true; it would be the best thing you could do, sure enough."

Rody, who, as our readers already perceive, was merely playing her as a skilful angler would a fish, replied,

"Will you answer me seriously, Alley? I don't ax are you fond o' me? for I could hardly expect that; but I do ax you solemnly, are you fond of any other?"

"I am," said she.

"Well, thank you, Alley," he replied; "an' God bless you for spakin' the truth. This is the last day I'll stay in the counthry; an', dear knows, you may blieve me when I tell you, that I'll go wid a sorrowful heart."

"I thought," said she, "that you'd be apt to inquire who it is I'm fond of."

"I'd as soon not know it," he replied; "but since you've put it into my head, who is it?"

"It's my mother," she replied; "ha, ha, ha! now are you satisfied?" and she glanced at him

with one of those smiling glances that convey any feeling but despair.

Rody seemed to feel as if new life had been at once infused into him. He flew to her ; "Alley dear !" he exclaimed, as if half mad with joy, "dear, dear Alley ! is it possible—could it, can it be possible ? It is ! it is ! I see it—I feel it—you do *not* love any one else. An' you *do* care about me. Don't deny it now—you do. I saw it in your eye, and I now—now feel it on your sweet an' darlin' lips."

"Rody, that's not generous," she exclaimed, disengaging herself from him ; "an' don't think I'll suffer you to take any sich liberty as that agin."

"Well, only say the word," he replied, "jist that one little word—that you care *something* for me. Alley darlin', say it."

"I'll not say it," she replied ; "see how you have pulled my hair about ; an' I *don't* care for you—sorra bit. What 'ud my mother say if she came in an' found me the way I am."

"Here, I'll help you up wid it."

"No, you won't : single your freedom an' double your distance, if you please. Don't think it's your Kilscaadhan girls you have."

"Well, it is the lovely head o' hair, sure enough," he observed.

"What's that to you whether it is or not," she replied, as she hastily braided it up. "Sorra civil word you'll get from me this month to come."

"Throth will I, for all so angry as you are. Your bark's worse than your bite. I'll hould goold to silver I make you laugh this minute."

"Ay, indeed ; laugh I'm sure !"

"Ay, laugh. There, now, look at me if you dare. I defy you to look me in the face this minute. I dare you to do it widout laughin'. Amn't I a purty boy—widout paint too?"

He had, in fact, twisted his features into an expression so irresistibly grotesque and ludicrous, that it was almost impossible to look at them with gravity. Alice, notwithstanding her anger, and several attempts to look indignant, at length was forced to burst out into a fit of mirth, which was violent just in proportion to her attempts at restraining it.

"Now," said he, "didn't I tell you I would—an' what is more, you *do* care for me ; so you need't deny it. Do you think we didn't undherstand one another's eyes this good while past?"

"Go to the sorra," she replied, striving to put on a frown ; "if you've nothin' else, you've a good stock of assurance any way."

"Ay have I, an' a good farm near Kilscad-dhan, wid a good stock of crop an' cattle on it ; an' I'll have you mistress of it before you're much ouldher."

"Go long wid you," she replied, with a half glance and a suppressed smile, "you're a purty fellow to be readin' the Penitential Psalms : they don't ordher you to be kissin' the girls at any rate."

" Oh, aisey, Alley dear, aisey. Whatever we do, let us not meddle wid religion, whether or not."

" Well, throth," said the innocent girl, "that's the third time for me ; but sorra harm I had in it."

" Well, I know you hadn't, darlin' ; but still its betther not," said this accomplished hypocrite, who, as he had commenced with religion, was also determined to end with it.

" Whisht," said she, "there's my mother—I know her foot."

The mother then entered, and after an exchange of two or three glances, Rody walked down the glen to meditate over the progress and prospect of his designs.

Our readers need not be told here, that in the scene just described, there occurred nothing out of the ordinary course of rustic courtship, as it usually proceeds between young persons of the most unblemished character ; and this observation we make, lest any one, unacquainted with the usages of country life, might feel disposed to impute blame, or want of maidenly delicacy, to Alice M'Mahon. The scene as described, is one which occurs in thousands of instances—nay, almost in every instance—where a serious intention of matrimony exists between the parties.

Rody having sauntered through the glen, and amused himself by tracing the windings of the river we have already described, at length turned his footsteps towards the mines in the dark hills

above. As he did so, it was necessary that he should return by the way he had come, and pass through the village of Ballybracken. The distance between the village and the mines was only about a mile; and, as is usual under circumstances of a similar kind, some of the workmen went home to their dinners, and others of them either brought it with them in the morning, or had it sent to them, by some member of the family, at the regular hour. Among the first class, were Brian M'Mahon and his son, Thomas.

Rody, on going up towards the mines, met them on their way home; and, on being pressed to return with them to dinner, he excused himself by saying, that "he was not a bit too well to-day; an', as for aitable, divil a morsel could pass his lips. No; he would take a walk to the hills; but if *Alley*, or any of them, liked, they might keep a mouthful for him when he came back."

The simplicity of country life is as rife with (lowly) ambition as is the highest grade of that which is termed fashionable. Rody's account of his circumstances, his excellent and cheap farm, and all the flattering details which, from time to time, he annexed to it, were not overlooked by the M'Mahons; especially on observing, as they often did, that the Rover seemed to look on Alice with a favourable eye. This, however, was part of his plan; for he knew what was precisely natural and calculated to prevent all possibility of suspicion being fastened on himself.

After the father and son had passed him, the former, looking back, said—

“Don’t you think, Tom, that Rody would make the crame of a good husband for Alley?”

“I do,” replied the son, “but I hardly think—yet, I don’t know—he looks at her often in sich a way—however, if he takes a fancy to her, he will soon spake out.”

“Throth, an’ I think he has a fancy for her already,” replied the father; “an’ did you hear what he said jist now? ‘If Alley,’ says he—poor girl, its she that ’ud be happy wid him an’ his fine farm: an’ another thing, Tom, luck an’ grace he’ll have, or any one that’s punct’il in sayin’ their prayers night an’ mornin’; an’, you know, he never misses them.”

“Divil a doubt of it, father, but he’d make the best husband ever Alley will get. If ever there was a thrue Catholic, an’ a thrue Christian, he is one—that *I know*. Oh! father; if you knew how that man loves his religion an’ his counthry!”

“Well, sure, there’s no harm in sayin’, may the Lord warm his heart to our darlin’ Alley, any how. He may go far before he’ll meet sich a wife; the Lord in heaven guard her an’ bless her!”

This, as we have said, was ambition; but it was that simple ambition which is consecrated into virtue by the purity and warmth of domestic love.

The Rover, after the few words of conversa-

tion with them already detailed, proceeded to the mines, where he went about from rock to rock, and from shaft to shaft, with all the air of a man to whom such a scene was perfect novelty. At length, having observed several of the men at dinner, and passed from group to group, he raised his hat three times off his head, each time distinctly, as if by way of accident, placing three of his fingers upon his right eye-brow. The men who were at the moment eating their dinner, appeared not to take any particular notice of him, with the exception of one individual, who, looking at him steadily, placed the three fingers of his left hand on his left eye-brow; and that moment, Rody, seeing that the man was at his meal, sat down on the ledge of a rock, without having excited either notice or observation. The man at length finished his dinner; and having once more placed the three fingers of his left hand on his left brow, looked at Rody, as if he had said, Here I am; what is your pleasure? or what is your wish? Our Rover made no reply, but walked up towards the crags which overhung them, and, in a few minutes, was followed by the man who had recognised, or, at all events, understood him. Having reached the crags, which he did, as if merely going to stretch his limbs and breathe fresh air, he, as well as our worthy Rover, disappeared.

“How long are you here, Malone?” asked the Rover, “and why did you not immediately let me know that you had come?”

"Simply," replied the other, "bekaise I hadn't time: this is my first day."

"The worthy magistrate's letter got you immediate employment of course."

"At wanst. Sure he can do any thing wid the chief proprietor, Ogle."

"Have you any notion of what he was at when you left him?"

"I only got a hint; but I think it's not far from the thruth, at any rate."

"What is it?"

"He's layin' the foundation for another cons—och, I can hardly get my tongue about it."

"A conspiracy, I suppose."

"The same: he's hard at work at it."

"Will he employ you in it?"

"I don't know. He says *this* is the last job I'll get. I b'lieve he's goin' to employ new hands. He's not plaised wid me for the way I thransported the Connors: he says it was more by good luck than by good guidin' I did it; an' that only the jury wor his friends, they'd never be thransported. Throth, an' he done me injustice there; for divil a harder or purtier piece o' swearin' ever I made in my life. I dunna when I was so proud out of any thing o' the kind; an' yet, I got but little thanks when done."

"Your mother and your wife and children are coming with you, of course?"

"They'll be here in a day or two."

"Well, then, when they come, I have a house

ready for them, in which they can sit rent free, or I'm much mistaken."

"Are you doin' any thing particular in this neighbourhood?" asked Malone.

"Come, come, Mat, no inquiries. All I have to say to you is, that when any thing happens to be proposed to you, fall in with it—join it. I need say no more. You always had the use of your eyes and ears, at all events, and—you are aware of the rest yourself. You and I know nothing about each other—never saw one another, and, of course, are perfect strangers. Remember that—as before."

"Hut, you needn't tell me John Thompson's news. Do you think I'm a fool?"

"Not I, indeed, Mat; I know you too well for that: but, mark me, you must be punctual in attending Mass, and conduct yourself with great propriety. Encourage drinking as much as you can in others, but don't drink much yourself; and if you show an inclination to devotion, it'll do no harm; so far from that, indeed, it will prevent the possibility of suspicion. I don't think, however, that you'll be able to manage here without an accomplice; and knowing this, I have written to Sharpe to say that he must send Gubby to assist you. Ogle must get him employment as Sharpe did you, in order that it may not look as if the one person sent you both here. For, mark me, unless in private, you and Gubby must be strangers too."

"A nate boy is the same Gubby."

"Ay, and there's a pair of you, Mat," replied Rody.

"Throth, and you needn't stop *there*," returned the other, with a wink and a grin, both of which were strongly indicative of the community of villany that subsisted between them.

They then separated ; and Rody, still better pleased that every thing was proceeding successfully, retraced his steps by a circuitous route towards the hospitable roof of honest Brian M'Mahon, where he arrived some time after he and his son had returned to their labour.

Tom M'Mahon having been elevated *per saltum*—by a leap—to the honour of an Article Bearer, felt somewhat at a loss how to proceed ; and, as was very natural, he sought the aid and advice of the Rover. Both were promptly at his disposal.

"Your first step," said that personage, "is to write, with your own hands, half a dozen copies of the oath and articles, to have them ready to give to every man you may think fit to make an Article Bearer of—that is, afther your own complement of fifty men will be completed. When you have all the parish *up*, then I'll bring you the appointment of Parish Delegate, an' along wid that, I'll then give you further instructions an' more knowledge."

"But how will I choose my men?" asked Tom, laughing.

"I'll tell you that same," replied the Rover. "Avoid havin' undher yourself the fellows that

can read and write. Always choose the most ignorant; bekaise you'll find that they're fittest for your purpose. It's always aisier managin' ignorant an' unlearned men, than them that has received good schoolin'; an' in this business, *obadiance to ordhers is every thing.*"

These instructions were at once acted upon. For two or three evenings Tom did nothing but copy out the Articles, after which, having in a few days completed his own number of fifty, he began to make Article Bearers with great earnestness and zeal. The previous night and evening meetings, to which we have already alluded—that is, the dances, gambling parties, &c. &c., together with hurling and football matches on Sundays, constituted the very best description of machinery for propagating the new system among the people. In this matter, experience fully corroborated the sagacious calculations of the Rover, who wisely withheld his secret until every thing was completely prepared for its reception.

The rapidity with which an evil principle spreads is beyond belief. In a wonderfully short period, not only the parish of Ballybracken, but the surrounding parishes, were corrupted with this pestilent leprosy, which was now fast spreading like a plague in all directions. Tom M'Mahon was very soon raised to the office of Parish Delegate, as the Rover had promised him, and there was nothing now the rage but "this New Business," as they called it—nightly lodges, secret meetings, and hole and corner consulta-

tions, of every shade and character. Every thing was now prospering to the Rover's most sanguine expectations ; and we question whether the bitterest enemy to our country could have wished to see her in a more degraded state than that to which this wicked Emissary and his principles were likely to bring her.

Rody's conduct during the sensation created by the novelty of Ribbonism, was worthy of a diplomatist, and would have reflected honour on Talleyrand. In no single instance did he mingle himself up with, or nurture it in any way ; on the contrary, he appeared to all intents and purposes, ignorant of its very existence. So admirably did he manage, that in the event of discovery, there was not a circumstance in existence which could trace the origin of it to himself. Tom M'Mahon was most solemnly sworn to secrecy ; and even if he had violated his oath, he could produce no other witness to corroborate his testimony, and one oath was as good as another under such circumstances. As for the copy of the Oath and Articles with which he had furnished M'Mahon, they were not in his own handwriting, or else, so disguised, that they could prove nothing against him. These observations, however, as touching the progress of Ribbonism, are rather in advance of our narrative, to which we now return.

There stood a little to the south of Ballybracken a small cottage, to which was attached a little garden, both not worth more than three or

four pounds a year. This cottage and garden had been for some time past the subject of dispute between a Mr. Ogle, already mentioned, and of whom the reader will hear more, and a gentleman named Spear, who, according to the opinion of the neighbours, had no earthly claim to it. No sooner had the circumstance of the lawsuit reached the Rover's ears, than he resolved to work it into his plot, and make it subservient to the design in view. Accordingly, in a few nights after his conversation with Mat Malone, he so managed it, that Malone and his mother and family found themselves in possession of the cottage in question, with a determination to keep possession until the legal proprietorship of the premises should be decided ; or, at least, for such a length of time as might be sufficient to enable him, after his own fashion, "to prove himself a friend to his country."

As matters stood now, the moral atmosphere was beginning gradually to darken. Meetings of young fellows in the public-house of Ballybracken became more numerous and frequent, bringing in man after man, until scarcely an individual in the village remained unconnected with them. In the mean time, disturbances began, in several directions, to break out, as did private quarrels among the people themselves, who had been up till then, at least, peaceable with each other. Intoxication, with all its train of evils, spread rapidly ; this was followed by neglect of business, and neglect of business by

straitened means, want of comfort, repining, and discontent. To this state had our worthy Adventurer brought that portion of the country which surrounded Ballybracken, as well, we need not add, as the unfortunate village itself.

CHAPTER IV.

A PROPOSAL OF MARRIAGE MADE AND ACCEPTED—
RODY LEAVES BALLYBRACKEN.

RODY now having perfectly established his system, and put it into full operation, determined on making a short visit to a different part of the country. Before taking this step, however, he asked Tom M'Mahon to join him in another stroll up the river we have already described, the time being, as before, a Sunday morning.

"Tom," said he, "I must lave the neighbourhood for a while; but before I go, I wish to spake to you about one or two matthers that's throublin' me."

"Why, what's throublin' you?" asked Tom "but, indeed," he added, "its foolish of me to ax you sich a thing, knowin', as I do, the scrape you're in; an', by the way, what do you intend to do about that?"

"I don't exactly know yet," replied Rody; "I think we'll thry an' get it settled. We're purty aiquil in point of numbers; an' if they'll give up prosecutin' our party, why, our party will forgive

them—so far, at any rate, as the law is concerned.”

“ You say there was a man killed on both sides.”

“ I said there was only one done for on both sides,” he replied ; “ but what signifies a man’s life when one’s religion is at stake ?”

“ I don’t agree wid you in that,” replied Tom ; “ a man’s life is a sairious thing, no matther what’s at stake.”

“ Why, it is, to be sure,” said Rody, who felt afraid of broaching such diabolical doctrines too openly. “ However, to drop that part of the subject, I’m frettin’ about my fine farm ; for, you know, as the sayin’ is, that when the cat’s away, the mice may play ; an’ although I have good, honest sarvints at home, still, begad, the honestest of them all is nothing the worse of havin’ one’s eye over them.”

“ Thru enough,” said Tom ; “ they say a good eye is worth two pair o’ hands.”

“ No doubt of it ; but talkin’ about the farm, Tom, I’m goin’ to mention a thing to you now, that I didn’t intend to spake about till this bit o’ throuble was settled.”

“ Well,” said Tom, “ let us hear it.”

“ Why,” he proceeded, “ the farm, as I said, is as good as ever a spade wint into. Now, as I’m a bachelor, an’ have a good farm, the next thing I want is a good wife—I say a good wife, in every respect ; for, let me tell you, I am, an’

always was, devilish hard to please, or I might be married long ago."

Tom's affectionate heart bounded with satisfaction and joy at this admirable prospect that was about to open to his sister; for he felt that the conversation would end by Rody proposing for her.

"I have now been livin'" he proceeded, "for some time in your father's house, an' I needn't say that I had every opportunity of knowin' what a darlin' girl your sisther, Alley, is. Tom, you see I like to do every thing above board; so, to save time, and make a long story short, it's my intention to make her mistress of my farm, if your father an' mother an' you will consent."

"Where do you lave Alley herself?" asked Tom.

"I have been spakin' to her on the head of it," replied the Rover, "an' she is quite willin' if you and they are. Now, what I'm proposin' to myself to do is this—I'll thravle by night to Balschaddhan, an' thry what can be done to get myself out of this mess I'm in—then I can come back, an' let us be married; but there's one thing I'd like, an' that is, that my uncle, who is priest of Balscaddhan parish, has often tould me, that unless he sees an' approves of the wife I'll marry, he'll never give or lave me—nor chick nor child belongin' to me—a single sixpence; so, you see, we must contrive some way to give him a look at her first—but, of coorse, that won't be difficult. If he likes her, as I know he will, why, well an'

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good ; but whether he does or not, I'll marry her."

"That's both fair an' manly, Rody," replied M'Mahon, "an' jist what I'd expect from an honest man. So far as I am consarned, you have my full consint, an' I think I may promise you my father's an' mother's. But now, Rody, don't you remimber that you promised to let me know more about this Ribbon business we have spread over the counthry."

"I think myself," replied Rody, "that if any man in your situation is entitled to it, you are ; but the thruth is, I haven't it in my power to let you into these things yet—that is, I can't do it widout liberty from higher authority. However, while I'm away I'll thry an' gèt that, so that when I come back, I'll have more information for you."

"As for myself," said Tom, "I'm a'most sorry that ever it came into the counthry at all."

"Why so?" asked Rody, surprized.

"Why, bekaise," continued Tom, "ever since it tuck root amongst us, there has no good followed it. The people drink more, and fight more, an' curse an' gamble more, an' neglect their business more, an', in fact, do every thing that's bad more than before it appeared at all. There's nothing now but collogin', an' plottin', an' talkin' among us of takin' the laws into our own hands. There's a little scoundrel that joined us, an' to tell God's thruth, he's nothing but a firebrand."

"Who are you spakin' about?"

"About that cunnin'-looking, skamin, little vagabone that joined us lately—Matt Malone. Throth, I'm much mistaken, or there's thrachery and desate in the same little blackguard's eye, an' in his heart too—what's worse."

"Is he son to the woman they call Molly Malone?"

"The same; the little vagabone, an' she made a moonlight flittin' into the house that has been nicknamed '*Debateable Castle*,' an' there they sit, although there wasn't a soul in the neighbourhood would have any thing to do with it, afeerd of gettin' into the clutches of the two scoundrels that's fightin' about it."

"Well, but what did this Molloy, or Malone—Malone, I b'lieve—do, Tom, that makes you spake of him so harshly?"

"Fifty things. He's always plottin' something, an' makes the labourin' men spend more money in dhrink than any ten men in the parish. He now wants us to turn out for higher wages, although, to tell the thruth, in *our* case the wages is fair enough, which, to be sure, is more than I can say for the labourers in the counthry generally."

"Well, Tom," replied Rody, "only that the scales is on your eyes yet, you'd see all these things in a different light. Wid regard to turnin' out for higher wages, little Malone is right—that is one of the objects of our system; bekaise if these fellows arn't made afeerd of us, things 'ud come to a poor pass."

"Begad," said M'Mahon, "they are comin' to a bad pass as it is."

"Well, plaise goodness," said the other, "I hope when I come here agin, that I'll be able to let you see more than you see at present. Why, man, if you could but undherstand it, I tell you that every thing is jist goin' on *as them that set the business afoot wishes*. Can I say more, now? No; an' I wish I could; for I'd soon give you the right key to every thing."

"How far is Balcaddhan from this?" asked Tom.

"About sixty miles," replied the other, "an' in a beautiful counthry all out."

"An' your uncle's parish priest of it?"

"He is," replied Rody, "an' the best creature livin'. His name is M'Dowdle; for he's my uncle by the mother's side, an' she was a M'Dowdle. It's a very respectable name in that part of the counthry; an', indeed, the Rev. Darby M'Dowdle is well known in the diocese. It's he that'll be delighted when he sees Alley—as he will, plaise goodness."

"An' when do you intind to start?" asked Tom, "an' what stay will you make away from us?"

"As short a one as I can, you may be sure," he replied; "indeed, I think I'll start in the mornin', plaise goodness. The first thirty miles I'll thravel in open day, and the next thirty by dark; for, you know, a man may as well keep a free foot while he can. At the most, it could

only be brought in homicide, or scarcely that ; for the whole harm was done in a Party Fight, an' they happened to die of the beatin' on both sides."

" Any thing for my religion," said Tom, his fine eye kindling with an enthusiasm which the heartless traitor beside him could never understand, " and any thing for my counthry, too, for the matther o' that ; but I hate useless cruelty, and don't like to see neighbours and acquaintances beatin' an' smashin' one another, merely bekaise the one won't go the way of the other, wherein we're commanded to love our enemies besides."

" An' yet you have bate the most powerful Orangeman that ever was in Ballybracken," rejoined the Rover.

" If I did, it was bekaise he called the Church that I an' all that have had our blood in their veins for ages belongs to, a scarlet—no matther, you know the rest."

" Well," replied the other, " I'm glad you gave it to him. But as I'm startin' in the mornin', Tom, will you mintion about Alley this evenin' to the ould couple. She an' I will take a walk up or down the river, I dunna which ; for to tell the thruth, I'd wish to settle matthers wid herself, an' lave nothin' in the dark. Open dalins, Tom, and above boord, is my rule, an' always will be."

" Barrin' in *this Ribbon* business," said Tom, laughing ; " there you're close enough."

“ Ay,” returned the other ; “ but there I have a duty to fulfil. Why, now, listen Tom ; pay attention to this : we daren’t write a letter to one another, through the post-office, upon *that* business, for fraid o’ lettin’ the Government come at us. And you know as well as I do, that if the Heads of the business wor to let themselves be known to every one that belongs to it, they might as well prepare their coffins at wanst ; for, unfortunately, the ould proverb is too thrue—put one Irishman on a spit, an’ you ’ll soon find another to turn him.—Do you understand me now ?”

“ I do,” said Tom ; “ you ’re right ; I grant it—you *are* right.”

“ To be sure ; for listen again ;—how can you or I be sartin, that the first man we meet is n’t a traitor in his heart ; an’ would n’t sell either of us, or begad both, for government goold ?”

“ But in that case,” said Tom, “ the safest way would be to have nothin’ to say to it at all.”

“ The safest ! Oh, Tom,” said the Rover, with a look of strong reproof, “ that’s a word I never expected to hear from *your* lips. The safest ; why, only I know you *too* well,—only I—but,—oh, no, you ’re not a *coward*, surely ; I hope, when I come back to the neighbourhood—

“ *To my father’s house,*” replied M’Mahon, with a look of pride, that would have graced the brow of a prince ; “ an’ I’ll tell you what, Rody,” he added, his whole frame excited at the idea ; “ suspect any one you like—but don’t dar’ to suspect Thomas M’Mahon.”

Rody seized his hand, and gave it a convulsive grasp ;—"that's enough," said he ; "but you 're wrong ;—I never did suspect *you* ; but can you blame me, placed as I am ?"

"No, Rody,—I cannot, you are only doin' your duty ; I see that ; an' right fit you are to do it."

"Wait till you know all," said the Rover, "if you did, you'd feel that there's a blessin' upon all our proceedings since the commencement. Why, if it was only myself an' Alley bein' brought to know one another ;—the darlin' girl that she is. Now do you know what, Tom ? Alley is a beautiful—a lovely girl ; every one knows that ; she's the flower o' the parish, in face an' figure ; but as I said, do you know what first mademelike her ?—I'll tell you ; I remarked—for there's no denyin' that my uncle gave me a religious education ;—I remarked that no night or mornin' ever passed over her head, widout her goin' to her knees an' sayin' her prayers. Now the girl that does that, will make a good wife."

"Ay," said Tom, "an' I say, Rody, that the boy that does it will make a good husband ;—an' you are that boy."

"Well, at any rate I did n't bring it to the family—I found it there," said the Rover.

"You found it here, sure enough ; but still you brought it, so far as you war consarned yourself," replied Tom.

"Well," said the Rover, with a cheerful smile, "I think all's right now between us, an' that we

undherstand one another; an' so havin' settled our accounts upon business, we'll dhrop that part of the subject; but don't you think that by the time we get home, an' shaves an' clanes ourselves up, it'll be full time to go to mass;—second Mass is out of the question at the Forth; so there's nothin' for it but last Mass at Aughind-rummon."

As Rody said, it did certainly appear, at least in the eyes of this honest and unsophisticated family, as if every thing connected with him, was likely to bring a blessing to them; or at all events to her, whom they all loved so fondly—their dear Alice. Our readers are aware of the growing attachment which he contrived to implant in her innocent and uncontaminated heart; but they are not aware of the force which that attachment had already gained in the bosom of a confiding girl, such as she was; where the feelings derive strength from their very simplicity and purity. She herself, had very properly communicated to her mother, Rody's views and proposals of marriage; all of which, were considered by the whole family, as not only acceptable, but most fortunate. The position, then, in which she and Rody stood, resembled that of lovers, betrothed with the full sanction of their mutual friends, more than anything else. Rody, however, who perfectly understood the full extent of his influence over the unsuspecting girl's heart, was determined, that ere they parted, even temporarily, she should plight her troth to him

with that kind of solemn feeling, which makes a young woman, placed as she was, look upon her lover, as one to whom she is bound by ties almost as strong as marriage itself.

On that Sunday evening, as they went out to take a walk, she felt her heart weighed down by the idea even of a temporary separation from him; nor did she seem anxious at all to conceal the cause of her love for him; as why indeed should she? Here was an exceedingly handsome young man, in circumstances of worldly prosperity and independance, who loved her, and to whom, with the full consent of her family, she was about to be united in the sacred bands of matrimony. What then had a pure-minded, warm-hearted, and simple girl to conceal under such circumstances. So far from that, any coquettish and affected attempts at concealment, would have been hypocritical, and out of all keeping with the candour and artlessness of her character.

"Well, Alley," said he, "nobody can say whether a thing comes for good or ill to one in the beginnin'."

"How is that?" said she, "I don't undherstand you."

"Why," he continued, "the scrape I got into about that party-fight, seemed a great drawback an' misfortune to me at first; but then agin, whin I think, that it was the means of bringin', me to know you, sure I can't but look upon it as a blessin'."

"Well, a blessin' to both of us," she replied,

with a sweet smile ; “for I’m not goin’ to let you deprive me of my share of it anyway.”

“Alley don’t talk that way, or you ’ll make me love you too much ; if you knew how every word you say, an’ every smile you give, goes to my heart, you’d not be surprized at the sorrow I feel in partin’ from you even for a while.”

“You have n’t all that sorrow to yourself either,” she replied ; whilst her beautiful features became overshadowed by tenderness ; “I never knew what it was to love any one till I met you ; an’ indeed, I could n’t think that your partin’ from me, as you say yourself, even for a while, could fill my heart with so much heaviness ;” as she uttered these words she was deeply affected.

“An’ you never did love any one before, Alley ?”

“Never, but yourself.”

“What’s your age now ?” he inquired, gazing on her with a look of fondness.”

“I was nineteen,” she replied, “last month ;” and whilst speaking, she turned her two large lustrous eyes upon him ;—she was at the moment in tears, with a look of such unutterable innocence, confidence, and affection, that it might have disarmed the purposes of a fiend.

“I need not axe you why you ’re crying,” said he, “because I know it.”

“No,” she replied, “you need not ; it’s strange,” she added, “I’m happy, an’ yet I’m sorrowful ; but indeed, you could n’t believe how much I feel bekaise you ’re lavin’ me.”

“An’ do you think I feel nothing,” he asked ;

"however," he added, "I'll make my own mind aisy before I go, an' yours too;—but do you know how?"

"No," she replied, "I do not, but you will tell me."

"I will," said he; "we'll be book-sworn to one another, an' then we'll be the same in one sense, as man an' wife."

"But I don't like to swear," she returned; "they say its not luckey, except when one can't help it."

"There's no harm in swearin' the truth," said he; "its only ignorant people that has that notion."

"But," said she, "sure they say an oath is not as bindin' as the hand-promise."

Rody saw the superstition at once, and eagerly caught at it.

"Indeed, Alley you are right," he replied; "the hand-promise is the most bindin' of all, except marriage itself; an' sure they say it is marriage, whenever a priest can't be had; you have no objection then to that?—Remember that it'll make us sure o' one another."

She hesitated for some time; "but where's the use of it," she replied, "an' we goin' to be married before long?"

"But its to make my mind easy," he replied; "durin' our absence."

"Well, then," said she; "if it 'ill make your mind aisy while you 're away, I will."

He then took her right hand in his, and in

the presence of God, promised to marry her, and to marry none other whilst she lived; after which, she, by his direction took his in the same way, repeating the words as before, with the exception of the proper substitution of names. Alice whilst uttering the words which were of very serious import, felt herself so completely overcome by their solemnity, as well as by the affection they indicated and involved, that she burst into tears, which her now betrothed husband was permitted to kiss away. This ceremony being over, they returned home, and the next morning at day break, Rody having taken leave of this affectionate and simple family, and of Alice, who literally sobbed with grief as she bade him farewell, turned his footsteps, as he said, towards his native parish of Balscaddhan.

CHAPTER V.

A PEEP BEHIND THE SCENES.

OUR scene now changes to a different and distant locality. Near a large country town, which must be nameless, stretches a hill, or ascent of considerable length, as you leave it in a southern direction. To the right of the road, there is a handsome amphitheatre of wood, somewhat like a crescent, in the centre of which stands a neat, indeed an elegant white house ; evidently the residence of a man able to support the rank and style of a gentleman. This is clear from the warm air of the house itself, and the neat comfortable appearance of the offices ; the well-walled garden, and the tastefully laid out lawn. In that house there is a study, neatly and cozily furnished ; and in that study, a little pale-faced man, with a keen, meditative, but sinister expression of countenance. The whole cast of his face is in truth peculiar, but repulsive ; his forehead, though not high, is broad and constructive in its formation ; and between his head and

his face there is a sad want of proportion ; the upper part of the former being unusually large, and the features beneath it, small, thin, and diminishing towards the chin, which resembles the small end of an egg. Altogether, it is the head of a selfish, griping, plotting, person ; of one who would have probably wasted a life, or a patrimony, if not both, in pursuit of the Philosopher's stone, or any other of the grand arcana which turned the brains of so many Alchemistic Projectors. His study is,—or to take up the proper tense, *was* in perfect keeping with his character. Opposite his desk hung a skeleton map, filled partially up with characters in cypher, which were known to none but himself, or those to whom he might choose to communicate the key to them. Over the chimney-piece was a picture of King William the Third, mounted upon a charger, and a picture of the Battle of the Boyne, done in Orange worsted, with King James the Brave making his escape upon a white woollen horse in the distance ; for the principle of the fair artist, whoever she was, evidently did not suffer her to deem his Majesty worthy of escaping on more appropriate worsted. The room, in fact, was hung round with mementos of party strife, that had been long the property of the historian, as well as by proofs of strong political feeling. The very ink-bottle had its prejudices, being nothing less than a bronze figure of Governor Walker holding his hat, which was filled with ink, in one hand, and pointing with the other, we suppose,

to the walls of Derry; whilst on the lid of the little gentleman's snuff-box, was King William again, wanting an eye, his portly nose having, to all appearance, been nearly demolished by an inveterate cancer, brought on by the pressure of the thumb, whenever the lid was opened or shut.

The hour at which the little gentleman has been presented to the reader, is about five o'clock, p. m., and he has not been many minutes in the study, since he dressed for dinner. Short as the time was however, he contrived to mark down upon a paper some few memoranda, which he read over once or twice and corrected. At length a knock came, a bell rang, and as the servant passed to open the door, his master simply said, "if that is Mr. Ogle, show him up to the drawing-room, and say I will be there immediately; but, John, as soon as Leeper comes, bring him in here;—that is, if he comes in about twenty minutes, for otherwise I cannot see him until after dinner." Leeper, however, did not come, and the little gentleman, having looked out of the window as if expecting some one with great impatience, at length adjourned to the drawing-room with something like an air of disappointment.

Some four hours have already elapsed, and the little dinner party, consisting of three gentlemen, including our host, are sitting in the back-parlour, one of them drinking punch, the host taking a comfortable glass of wine, and the third,

sipping a little from time to time, (but not in fact drinking,) with an exceedingly placid air. One of his guests was a common looking man of very coarse and vulgar manners ; over dressed in such a way, as if he imagined that his dress alone constituted him a gentleman. His fingers were loaded with rings, and from his fob was suspended an enormous bunch of gold seals. His father had been first, Steward, and subsequently, Agent, to an excentric old nobleman in the neighbourhood, under whom he contrived to amass a very tolerable fortune, which his son now inherited. 'Tis true, it was late in life, when this chance of feathering his nest was presented to him ; and the consequence was, that his worthy son, born to but humble prospects, had received only a limited education. He was now, however, worth about two thousand a-year ; but as his claims to associate with the gentry of the country were not recognised, he felt exceedingly anxious to fall upon some plan, that might give him such a station in society as would occasion him to be received among his betters. Such is a brief history of the large over-dressed gentleman with the red face.

The other guest, was a thin, tall man, remarkable for great suavity of manner, and a low insinuating voice. He was distantly related to a man of good family, who held a high official situation in the Castle, and was supposed to have some interest in procuring appointments. The tall thin man's intellect was by no means of a

very acute character ; on the contrary, he had never been the master of three ideas that he could honestly claim as his own. He was, in short, one of those soft, mild, feeble-minded, milk and water creatures, with easy plausible manners, that are so often met with in society ; and whom you will see at a party, seated over beside a sofa, in conversation with three or four old women, each of whom can beat him on any topic he may select, and all of whom are delighted with "Dear Mr. Curd ; he is so amiable ; so soft and polished in his manners, and so intelligent. What a pity that the world does not contain more men like Mr. Curd ! Is he not a delightful creature ?" "Quite a treasure, Miss Cruet ; and was the delight of a small tea-party, given by Miss Willow, on Friday evening." Such was the party, who were engaged in the following conversation :

"But what surprises me," said the large man, the same whom Sharpe called Mr. Ogle ; "what surprises me, an' upon my honour and sowl, it *does* surprise me ;—is, how you can manage such matters."

"Why," replied our host, "the thing is very easily accounted for, Mr. Ogle ; I happen to have some brains here."

"Where !" said Ogle, who happened to be looking out of the back window into the garden, at the moment.

"Where !" exclaimed our host, repeating the word, and looking at him with surprise ; "why

in my pocket, to be sure ; is n't that where a man carries his brains, Mr. Forde ?"

"Excuse me, Mr. Sharpe, but I should think in his head ;" replied the point-blank Mr. Forde.

"Oh," said Sharp, "that alters the case ; but I can tell you, there's many a man carries his brains in his pocket, for all that."

"Well, I assure you, Mr. Sharpe, I never heard of such a case."

"Nor I," observed Ogle, "in all my life."

"Faith," said Sharpe, "and what is more, it not only happens, but I can tell you, that there's one of you sitting at my table this minute, with his brains in his pocket.—ha, ha, ha !"

"Come, how is that ?" said Ogle ; "search your pockets, Mr. Forde," he added, addressing that gentleman, who only smiled.

"Why," said Sharpe, "don't you know the man that has a strong purse can purchase the use of other people's brains ;—you, for instance, purchase mine,—mine, therefore, are yours for the time ; so that without much logic, you may easily see how the thing can be done—your purse and another person's brains being convertible terms."

"Ay," said Ogle, "that's very good—at all events, every man has n't yours, Mr. Sharpe ; however, are you certain the thing can be done ?"

"It is done, in point of fact," replied the other ; "and I believe our friend Forde here, knows, that we are not without some influence at the Castle."

"I know it," replied Forde; "for I believe it is only a few days since I received a letter from my relative, in which allusion was made to you, as a person who has rendered great services to the country and the government."

"And is there no way in which *I* could serve them?" asked Ogle; "I certainly am as willing to serve the Government as any many alive."

"No," said the little fellow; "as soon as you shall have got your Commission, I would recommend you to lead a quiet life, as a country magistrate, at least for a while."

"But *you* are a country magistrate," replied Ogle, "and yet you can serve the Government, and don't lade a quiet life."

"By the bye, Forde, have you that document about you?" asked Sharpe; "I mean the letter from your cousin; because if you have, I will thank you to show Mr. Ogle that passage; my dear sir," said he, turning to Ogle; "I do not lead exactly a very quiet life either; but if you said an active life, and a busy life, it would come nearer the truth. Many districts of the country are in such a state of disturbance, that no man who values public tranquillity, can, or ought to lead an inactive life, especially where there is so much to be done; always supposing, Mr. Ogle, that his birth, connections, and education, are such as qualify him for taking a conspicuous part in measures that are calculated to tranquillize the country."

"I know," said Ogle, "that on the score of

birth, I can't go far ; an' as for larning an' education, I have n't been over stocked with them ; still I say, a Commission would give me a great lift in the world."

"Unquestionably," replied Sharpe, "and my advice to you is, that on getting your Commission for the Peace, you will not seek in the beginning—now you will excuse me, Ogle ; you are aware that I know all your circumstances and history, as does Forde here ; and indeed, who does not?—so, I say you will excuse me for speaking so plainly ; very well—you must not, in the beginning, obtrude yourself too much in an official way among your brethren on the Bench, as too many other upstarts do ; but bear your honours modestly and meekly, and with the greatest deference and respect towards them. In a short time they will begin to say one to another ; 'eh, Cooper, this fellow Ogle is not so bad after all ; the rascal has some modesty in him ; he does n't thrust himself forward as Beatty did ; what do you think but he refused to back a warrant the other day, until I should back it first. Now I say, that was knowing his station, and as he is one of us, why I'll ask him to dinner.' This, Ogle, is your cue. However, never mind, I'll drill you admirably myself."

"But pardon me, Mr. Sharpe, you know the Magistrates don't like *you*."

"No, because I'm a friend to the people ; because they know me to be honest ; and that I tell the truth in a quarter where I have influence,

and they have not. Forde, my good fellow, upon second consideration, I think you may as well read all that letter as a part of it. Show Ogle the cover ;—there it is, you see, marked *private*, with a Castle frank, and the words, *On his Majesty's Service*, in good black print on the back of it. Read along, will you?"

Forde accordingly read as follows :

"Dublin Castle."

(Private.)

"My Dear Sir,

"In reply to yours of the 10th, I beg to say, that although there has been at present no outbreak in the district of Ballybracken, yet the Government have reason to believe, that the seeds of a popular commotion are shooting into a rapid growth in that part of the country ; a circumstance which unfortunately is not peculiar to that immediate locality. At present, the Government are in communication with a gentleman who is admirably qualified to develop this pernicious system of conspiracy against law, life, and property, which it seems is there gaining strength. Should it be crushed or suppressed, without any outbreak of popular violence, it is not likely that your friend, Mr. Ogle, can *now* succeed in getting an appointment to the Bench ; although I admit, that his claims, as proprietor of the mines in that neighbourhood, are certainly strong. If, however, on the con-

trary, the peace of that district, should become disturbed, it is likely,—perhaps certain, notwithstanding a good deal of opposition from *certain* quarters, that he will be appointed. Government have received very valuable instructions from your neighbour, Mr. Sharpe, on this particular subject; a subject which no man seems to understand so well, or can trace so successfully. I think you had better consult him, as I know of scarcely any person who possesses more substantial influence with Government, nor who has rendered greater, or more important, or more honourable, services to it and the country at large. Of course, I cannot violate official secrecy by being more communicative, and must therefore conclude, by assuring you,

“That I am, my dear Sir,

“Very sincerely yours,

“THOMAS J. TURNER.

“Christopher Forde, Esq.”

“There is little doubt, Forde, but *you* will procure him the appointment,” said Sharpe; “it cannot be in better hands; as I said, the thing is done, if any man of common sense can understand a letter.”

“My relative has every influence with the Under-Secretary, who indeed is the acting man,” replied Forde, in his low, calm voice; “and as for myself, I assure you, I have no misgivings on the matter, Mr. Ogle.”

"Begad," said Ogle, "I hope they'll make me a Magistrate, at all events ; at any rate, when I get my commission I'll give you all a rousin' feed."

"Show me the letter, a moment," said Sharpe ; "listen, Ogle, to this passage, and mark it ; 'if on the contrary, the peace of the district should become disturbed, it is likely,—perhaps certain, notwithstanding a good deal of opposition from certain quarters, that he will be appointed ;' he then makes allusion to myself, and of course overrates me ; but no matter, I have a bit of brains left still ;—well mark this, though ; do you think it likely, Ogle, that when a district like Ballybracken gets into the state described by Forde's friend here—do you think, I say, that things will go on without an outbreak ?"

"Begad I don't think it is ; but it's hard to say ; on the other hand, after all, things may go on quietly in the long run ; an' as for myself, begad—an' dang my bones, but I'd rather never be a magistrate, than have any blood spilled, or lives lost, any how,—especially my own."

"Here, Forde, is your letter," said Sharpe ; "and now, Ogle, just throw *your* eye over that one," said he, handing each a letter.

"This is a mistake," said Ogle ; "it's the same one, begad, that we've been reading."

"There is certainly a mistake," observed Forde ; "this letter is addressed to the Rev. Darby M'Dowdle, Post-office, Crossmacracken."

"Show,—show," said Sharpe, taking the letter quickly out of Forde's hands ;—"yes, I gave the wrong letter certainly."

"But who the deuce is the Rev. Darby M'Dowdle?" asked Ogle ; "some priest, begad, I'll wager ;—ha, ha, ha !"

"It would be a very curious thing," said Forde, "to find Mr. Sharpe in correspondence with a Popish Priest !"

"Read that," said Sharpe, handing Ogle a letter triumphantly ; "there is, however, a bit of a secret in it, Forde, between Ogle and me ;" he added, addressing the latter.

Ogle read as follows :

"LONDON."

"I have just received your letter which followed me to London, and have merely time to say, that immediately on my return to Dublin, I shall have the claim concerning your friend's appointment attended to and granted.

"Very faithfully yours,

"THOMAS M——.

"Under Secretary."

"Short and sweet," said Ogle, in an evident soliloquy, he then continued to read aloud : "don't go home with this poor curd of a devil, Forde, until we discuss matters between ourselves ;—let him go by himself."

"What the devil are you about, Ogle?" said Sharpe, hastily interrupting him ;—"eh ?—well,"

he added, changing to good humour; "ha, ha, ha!—after all, Forde, there is nothing like being above board; I wanted to give Ogle a hint to stay and have a glass of brandy and water after you were gone; and surely you *are* a poor curd of a devil," he added, "for you don't drink.—Why, Ogle, you blockhead, did n't you see, that what you read was written in pencil; and besides, was my own handwriting."

"Begad," replied Ogle, "I did n't know I was reading aloud till you spoke."

"Ah," returned the other, "you're a bright subject for the magisterial Bench. However, never mind; hand me the letter, and take your punch. Come, Forde, join us in a glass of punch, and I'll never call you names again."

"Much obliged," returned Forde, drily; "you know I don't drink; however, lest I may be a bar to your enjoyments, I will bid you both good night."

"Go to the drawing-room,—have some tea," said the little fellow, "and Emily will play you a tune. How could you read out what you might have seen at a glance to have been designed only for yourself?" said Sharpe, in a tone of reproof. "The fellow is a fool, I grant you, but then he's as vain on some points, as he is weak in all;—however, it does n't matter. My plan, Ogle, I wish to tell you is this,—and I think you will admit it to be a good one. This fellow, Forde, is the man who *ostensibly* is procuring the Magistracy for *you*. Now what do

you think is my object in this? Simply to save *your* character from any future discoveries, or imputations, as touching what might be termed bribery on your part, if it should come to be known. Now, suppose such a charge should be brought against you, which could only be on the supposition, that you could not keep your own secret—do you not see that the Government themselves, having granted the appointment at Forde's solicitation, could never suspect *you* of paying *me* for it; and as for Forde, the poor devil could swear that he never received a farthing from you; and you, that you never paid him one, on account of it. So far, so good;—that settles that; and if you and I should be named, do not the Government know again, that I never got you a magistracy from them. So that through my management, we have the Government itself to bear witness for our integrity in each case. Do you not call that skill?—eh? ha, ha, ha !”

“Wait,” replied Ogle, sadly puzzled by Sharpe's duplicity, “till I get the commission.—Begad, and dang my bones, you shall find me honourable.”

“Well, but you pay me the first five hundred this evening, according to our agreement.”

“Certainly, Sir,—honour bright, Mr. Sharpe. Begad, and dang my withers, but you could beat a matchmaker. Here is five notes of the Bank of Ireland, each for a round hundred.”

“Very well, my dear Ogle, you may consider yourself as good as on the Bench; and now for

a lobster and a glass of brandy and water, and no more about business for this night."

The supper having been discussed, Ogle, big with the ambition of rising to the Magistracy, wished his host a good night, and sought his bed, where he dreamt that he signed J. P. after his name, which he knew right well stood for Justice of *Quorum*.

CHAPTER VI.

AN OLD FRIEND WITH A NEW FACE.

WHEN Ogle had gone, Sharpe stood with his elbow on the chimney piece, and for a few minutes appeared to muse deeply. "Well," thought he, "there is at any rate a good thousand pounds secured;—and all because that vulgar blockhead wishes to be considered a gentleman; which he thinks he cannot be—heaven help him—unless he is raised to the dignity of a Magistrate; just as if they were convertible terms; whereas it frequently happens that no two characters are more antithetical to each other."

He then rang the bell, and the servant entered.

"Is Mr. Forde in the drawing-room?" he asked.

"No Sir, he went away immediately after leaving the dining room."

"Did Mr. Leeper call since I last inquired about him?"

"No, Sir."

"If alive he will be here to night yet," said his master, "keep a sharp eye, or rather a sharp ear to the door; and if he comes, show him in here."

"I shall Sir."

"Now," proceeded he, continuing his soliloquy after the servant had gone; "people would say, if I could be discovered, that I am one of those men who trade upon the crimes and outrages of the people.—Granted, and a good trade I find it. But am I the first that has done so? Am I the first that has by the means of Emissaries and Incendiaries, first corrupted them, and afterwards won the confidence of an unsuspecting Government, by pretended discoveries of the very principles which we have ourselves secretly implanted among them? No, I am not the first, and I will not be the last; for so long as the aforesaid people shall be senseless enough to take the bait, there will be always plenty of those who fish in troubled waters to give it to them. When the people despise the admonitions of their own clergy, and of their best and truest friends, I don't see any great harm in taking them into our hands, and turning them, at their own expense, to our account. As for my part, I'm not afraid of discovery; taking care, as I do, that the instruments I work with, though right well adapted to my purposes, are so infamous, that any charge or treachery against me or any one on their part, would be scouted by the world. Besides, I have them in my power, and that is

the best of it. As for Leeper,—but curse him,—hist, ay, there he is ; I knew he would not dare to disappoint me.”

The words had scarcely issued from his lips, when our friend Rody, dressed in a very decent suit of black, entered the dining-room, and made a kind of obeisance to Sharpe, which seemed to be partly serious and partly ironical ; the irony however, being so very nearly merged in the serious, that no eye but that of a keen observer indeed could have noticed it.

“ Ah, Leeper, is this you ? I thought you were about to fail me ;—pray shut the door after you :—well, but first and foremost, how are you ? ”

“ Why, as well as the anxiety naturally arising from a very dangerous undertaking would permit me. My health is very good, but that is no reason why I should not hold myself prepared for a *sudden* transit into a better world, as they say.”

“ Now, to what do you allude, Leeper ? Not to the outstanding affair, I hope ? ”

“ Not at all ; but the risk I ran in this last business.”

“ In your case there can be no great risk, Leeper ; your powers are too Protean ever to suffer you to be detected ; however, let that pass for the present. Give me a full and correct statement of what you have done ? in other words, has your success been equal to what I expected ? ”

“Considerably beyond it ; I have the country about Ballybracken in such a state, that in a month’s time, you may have it *proclaimed*.”

“And yourself safe and unsuspected ;—*all* safe ?”

“Myself and you, and all safe.”

“No possible chance of danger ?”

“Scarcely ; but if there be a shadow of insecurity we must follow the old principle,—that of removing the young fellow by whose instrumentality I introduced our principles ;—his name is M‘Mahon.”

“Why, have you any apprehensions from him ?”

“None as to the obstruction of our designs ; but there is a probability, that I may, ere long, have some as regarding my own personal safety. I think he’s beginning to sicken of it ; or in other words, to regret, in consequence of the unsettled state to which it has brought the neighbourhood, that he ever had anything to do with it.”

“Then, in that case, you will adopt the old method.”

“I think so ; legally he can do me no injury ; I have taken care of that ; but, morally, or rather physically, he may, by denouncing me to those over whom he has influence, if he should suspect me,—as suspect me he will.”

“I don’t understand you ;—how do you—how *can* you—know that ?”

“Perfectly well ;—he has a sister.”

“ Ah,—I see, whom you have debauched ?”

“ No, not at all,—you are quite mistaken ; she is incapable of being corrupted.”

“ Well then, what do you mean ?”

“ You shall know that in due time ; but at all events, it will be necessary, as well on her account, as for the sake of our complete success, that the brother should be removed.”

“ In which sense ?”

“ In either ; but *I* should prefer transportation ; his removal from the country is quite enough for our purposes ; so that hanging him, is not in fact necessary.”

Rody, as we shall still call him, seemed to experience some very painful sensations at this part of the dialogue ; he became pale, and his voice lost its firmness.

“ What’s the matter with you ?” asked Sharpe ; but he immediately checked himself, as a man would who felt, that in asking the question, he was probing an old sore,—reviving a disagreeable reminiscence ; “ no matter,” he proceeded, “ I can understand what you feel tolerably well.”

“ You are altogether mistaken,” replied Rody, “ what I felt is not weakness ; not certainly moral weakness, for of that I am incapable ; the truth is, I feel fatigued and jaded.”

“ Take some refreshment,” said Sharpe ; “ there is brandy, wine, and whiskey,—please yourself.”

“ I’ll try a glass of brandy and water then,” said the other, helping himself as he spoke ; “ oh, no—not a whit of moral weakness in my com-

position, and *you* ought to know that, certainly."

"Perhaps," said Sharpe, "there is no man utterly free from some portion of it; so that it is not necessary you should apologize for it; however, proceed."

Rody, having swallowed the glass of brandy and water, seemed completely reassured, and resumed the conversation with more confidence.

"If you wish to have that part of the country proclaimed," he proceeded, "you have little time to lose."

"Unquestionably I do wish it,—and soon too."

"So much the better," replied Rody, smiling, "otherwise there is some danger that my passions may interfere with my politics."

"What, M'Mahon's sister again?"

"Precisely; she is inaccessible by the ordinary arts of seduction, I must consequently approach her through a more legitimate guise."

Sharpe started; "are you seriously fond of the girl," he asked, "and is she handsome?"

"She would grace the coronet of a Countess," replied Rody; "her person is beautiful; but at the same time, I can assure you with truth, that my passion for her is not overburthened with sentiment."

"Be cautious in that," replied the other; "you know there is always danger wherever a woman is concerned. You found the people as credulous and as easily imposed on as ever?"

"Certainly; and they are of opinion, that their great leaders are all at the bottom of the

Ribbon system ; that it has originated from them, and that nothing but fear of the law prevents them from publicly avowing it."

"All right, and just as we wish. Why, really, Leeper, it is impossible to resist the temptation of misleading a people so besotted as this. They *will* believe these things, although they know that their Leaders have already denounced Ribbonism in every possible form of language ; they know too, that their own clergy have done the same ; and yet, no sooner does some scoundrel impostor like you—

"Thank you, Sir," said Rody, laughing,—“but at the same time, while you abuse the tool, don't forget the workman who uses it.”

“I beg your pardon, Leeper ; I did not mean to offend you.”

“Never mind that,” said Leeper, “it's not a trifle should occasion us to quarrel ;—proceed.”

“Well, no sooner does some rascally impostor assume their dress, language, and religion, than they permit him to lead them, through the means of secret and senseless confederacies, into the very traps thus laid for them ; yes, and to lead them without the ordinary precaution on their part of inquiry into his true name, character, place of birth, or business in the country. Why, upon my word, Leeper, it's a pleasure—so to speak, to mislead a people, who it would seem are bent on being misled.”

“Yes,” replied Leeper ; “but do you know in what light they understand these denunciations on the part of their Leaders ?”

"Not exactly : it is enough for our purposes that they neglect them."

"Their impression and belief are, that their Leaders, in denouncing Ribbonism, are not serious—that they do so to blind and mislead the Government, which otherwise might suspect the Leaders themselves to belong to it. In fact I agree with you ; it would be a pity not to turn such besotted credulity and gross ignorance to some account ; for which reason, I'll drink in good brandy—that *they may long continue easy dupes in the hands of their enemies !*"

He then detailed, at more length, the means by which he introduced his pernicious doctrines into the hitherto peaceable and industrious town and neighbourhood of Ballybracken, and dwelt with malignant triumph on the rapidity with which they had already spread over the country.

"And now," said he, "so far as we are concerned, there is little more necessary. All that is to be done, is to affiliate the Ballybracken affair with that which we have formed in the metropolis, from which they will receive their signs and pass-words. The system will be then, as in fact it is, a self-acting one, that will require little further impulse from us. However, now to proceed to another subject—I want money."

"I never had less to spare : however you shall have some. There are thirty pounds."

"I will not take it."

"Why so ?"

"It is quite inadequate—I must have fifty."

"Must have !"

"I will not accept less."

"But why use the term *must* with *me* ?"

"Simply," replied Rody, firmly, "because when I say it I mean it. Do you imagine, although you keep me in the dark as to your real design in implanting this system among the people, that *I* am so besotted as to believe you reap no personal advantage from it ?"

"None in life, except the gratification of a general principle."

"A general principle !"

"Yes, a general principle ; and that principle is one which opposes the idea of England making any concession whatever to Popery."

"I do not understand."

"Do you not know, my good, easy, simple fellow, that so long as we can attach a character of insubordination, violation of law, disregard of life and property, and habits of bloodshed and murder to the Roman Catholic inhabitants and Roman Catholic districts of the country, England and her legislators will look upon them as unfit to be trusted with civil privileges, or political power. Do you not understand that ?"

"I do ; but I do not see how that is a personal matter to *you*, beyond what it is to thousands in and above your rank of life, who do not go so far as to pay for corrupting the people."

"That is simply because I'm a warmer friend to my party, and a bitterer enemy to Popery than all of them put together."

Our readers will perceive here, that Sharpe was playing the same game with Rody that Rody played with Thomas M'Mahon. Rody suspected strongly that Sharpe had a much deeper personal interest in the propagation of Ribbonism than he chose to avow; for he knew the latter too well, to believe for a moment that he would go such lengths as to touch his purse for the support of a general principle, at least without strong hopes of remuneration in some shape from some quarter.

"I am not satisfied with your reasoning," he replied; "because I feel—and you will excuse me for saying so—that it wants that which all reasoning ought to have, a principle of conviction."

"Oh, as to that," said Sharp, "since your simplicity or want of comprehension renders it necessary, I can give you an abundance of reasons why a certain class should wish to see Ribbonism prevail. For instance; are there no bad landlords or bad agents in the country, no bigots, who would feel glad to be able to plead the outrages of the people in justification of their own oppression?"

"But what kind of reasoning is this from you?"

"Tut, man, *I* can see *the truth* as well as any one; but I am now laying the matter naked in support of my own conduct. Is it not a convenient thing for many a man to be able to say,—‘these people on my property are turbulent, dis-

loyal, and dangerous; I must get rid of them ;' and in point of fact, he is right—their conduct justifies his argument and the conclusion he comes to. Don't you see now that I am serving my party?"

"At the expense of the unfortunate people."

"I grant it; but that is no affair either of yours or mine."

"But it is your generosity that surprises me; for you will pardon me again—it is very well known, that no man loves money more than you do, or can turn it to better account."

"I grant that too; but this is my particular hobby, and there is the truth of it. I love plotting and secrecy, naturally; and feeling that I do, I look upon it as a more virtuous course of action to make such a *penchant* subservient to the interests of my party;—and that's all I know about it."

"I wonder your expulsion from the Orange system did not cool much of your attachment to the party you are labouring for."

"No, Leeper; that is a proof to you that I am above merely personal considerations. I beg you to mark that."

"I do, and shall; and upon the strength of it, I expect fifty pounds instead of thirty."

This was rather catching him in his own pit-fall; and although he cursed Leeper in his heart for his dexterity, yet he felt, that without placing his practice in opposition to his theory, he could not readily refuse the money.

"Very well," he replied, "if it were only to convince you finally, you shall have it."

"You will also not forget your solemn engage-

ment, to provide me a Government appointment."

"You know that every promise I have made you is conditional. Continue to deserve my confidence. There are fifty pounds for you. When the Ballybracken affair is ripe, and drawn to a head, I shall immediately commence to consider your interests, always, be it understood, upon the same condition."

"Thank you—this, now, is but just; for you know I run all the risk. But before I go, let me ask, if you have heard any vague rumours about what some of the countrymen call a *Black Committee*?"

The Rover, as he put this question to Sharpe, kept his eye steadily fixed upon his face; but Sharpe, whether conscious or not of any connection with a committee bearing such an ill-omened name, appeared to hear the interrogatory with perfect indifference.

"A Black Committee," he replied; "no, I have heard nothing of it. What do they mean by a Black Committee?"

"Faith, that is more than I can tell, or probably they themselves; but a rumour is abroad, that there exists such a thing as a Black Committee, and what is more, that you are one of them."

This last assertion was an addition of his own; or rather, we should say, the whole circumstance was so, the fact, in truth, being, that no such report had at *that* period gone abroad.

"Ha, ha! that is comical enough too," said

Sharpe; "I a member of a Black Committee! They have selected a bad colour though; but I suppose this is some malignant calumny sent abroad by the Orangemen."

"Why by the Orangemen?"

"Surely you know it's not now a secret, that they charged me with making improper communications to a great Leading Member in opposition to the Government—the great Whig Member for _____ in England."

"And," said Rody, smiling significantly, "perhaps they were right; let us suppose you were only indulging your hobby, ha, ha, ha!"

"No, no; they did me injustice there, and this is some calumny of theirs; but what further did you hear about this Black Committee?"

"Why, faith, that they are acting very much after our own fashion; first corrupting and then betraying. It's reported that there is a swaggering Castle Hack and Lawyer, who teaches the said Committee how to involve the people in illegal proceedings in such a way, as that the law cannot take hold of them—of the Committee, I mean, and not of the people, who are sure to suffer. It is also said, that they correspond by cypher, that they have maps that can be understood only by themselves, and that they play a double game between Government and the people, upon the schoolboy principle, that '*none can find so well as they who hide.*'"

Rody, whilst communicating this intelligence to Sharpe, kept, as we have said, his eye keenly and searchingly fixed upon his countenance. The

scrutiny, however, was ineffectual. Not a muscle of Sharpe's face appeared disturbed. He looked at Rody as any indifferent person would who was listening to something of no great consequence,—that excited in him a little surprise at the time, but nothing more.

“I thought,” said Rody, “that there was nobody in the field but ourselves.”

“Tut, man, our predecessors have been in the field for years,” replied Sharpe. “It is now late, however, and you must be off. I leave the Ballybracken affair to your own management. If you choose to make a pounce on M'Mahon and transport him, why, perhaps, it is safest: in that case, Malone and Gubby are your men. All I say is, don't let the girl get too much influence over you, and let me see you on the night after to-morrow.”

He then rang the bell, and the servant appeared:—

“Here, Appleton, let out Mr. Leeper, and afterwards place a candle in my bedroom.”

“The candle is there, sir, already,” said Appleton.

He then opened the hall-door for Leeper, and gently laying it to, stepped outside, and whispered, whilst he thrust a letter into his hand,

“Wait in the stable till he goes to bed. I left it purposely open.”

He then stepped quietly into the hall, and shut and secured the door, as if he had not gone out at all.

Sharpe's amazement at Rody's allusion to the Black Committee was beyond the power of language to express. He paced the floor in a state of vexation almost bordering on frenzy. Sometimes he stopped suddenly, then went on, and paused again. At one moment he would make a motion of impatience by whisking his open hand rapidly through the air, and again he would strike his shut fist into the palm of his other hand, still accompanying each act with language well suited to his gestures :—

“In the name of all that's treacherous and deceitful, how could this Protean scoundrel have come to the knowledge of these matters? Let me see—let me see—how could he? How is it possible? Could I betray myself?—and unless I could, I see no earthly means of penetrating that affair—none. It is impossible. I am a sober man—cautious almost to a fault. Yes, I am a sober man—not likely to get drunk and blab—and yet how could this knavish Proteus get at it? Curses consume him! He has got a key somehow. I know it by the confident—no, the impudent air with which he watched my face whilst catechising me upon it. No one has access to my private papers. Emily, indeed, might occasionally—but no,—the girl has no more suspicion of my secrets than a child; and yet, who else could?—Tut, as to her, the notion's ridiculous. However, I now know my policy. The moment I shall have gotten out of this vagabond all I want, he must be taught a lesson. It is well, indeed,

that he is in my power—but then again, could it be possible that he has me in his? Curses on him, at all events—curses on the villain! I shall soon dispose of him—soon dispose of him!”

He then proceeded to examine his private drawers and papers, all of which he found in a state of admirable security—not a single appearance of disorder or disarrangement, but every thing just exactly as he had left it. Having satisfied himself in this matter he then withdrew, and after some further time spent in striving to get a clue to Rody’s knowledge of the Black Committee, he went to bed and fell asleep.

Appleton finding that he was now at liberty, went by the back way to the stable, bearing a dark lanthorn in his hand, by the aid of which Rody perused the letter.

“Tell her,” said he, “that I am to be here the night after to-morrow, and that I will bring an answer to this with me, which you,” he added, addressing Appleton, “can convey to her.”

Appleton looked at him, and, shutting one eye very significantly, nodded his head; “all right,” he replied, “it will go safe; so make your mind easy on that head. Faith, Mr. Leeper, you’re the boy for bewitchin’ them.—Then, blood alive, how, when, or where did you contrive to come round her at all? Any how, you’ll have one comfort—the divil a many that knows the same lady an the tongue she has, will envy you when you get her. Hell purshue the greater thief in Europe than she is. She can keep her croobs

from nothin' that she takes a fancy to ; an', between you an' me, it's not the first time the father had his handfuls to do to prevent her from bein' prosecuted ; and as for truth, whether she and it may ever meet, I don't know ; but, by my sowl, they're parfit sthrangers up to the present time. 'This is by way of a friendly hint to you.'

" Well, but you'll admit she's good-looking."

" Divil a doubt of that—she's a handsome vagabone, sure enough. However, the divil's luck to her, for she scalds the heart in me every day of my life."

" It's a wonder," observed Leeper, " that the fact of *your* knowing *our* correspondence and intimacy would not keep *her* quiet."

" Quiet ! divil a thing in life could keep her quiet, barrin' a gag an' a straight waiscoat. Sure I did threaten to inform her father, an' the answer she gave me was—'by Japers if you attempted it, you villain, I'd blow your brains out' ; an, my hand to you, she's the very rascal would keep her word."

" Well, never mind, Sam ; leave her to me, and if I don't contrive to subdue her, I'm a little mistaken—that's all."

" God enable you, then ! for if any thing ever was a work of grace, it'll be to sober that scoundrel."

Leeper gave a subdued laugh, and having folded his letter and bidden indignant Sam good night, he departed

CHAPTER VII.

TWO POLITICAL EXPECTANTS.—A NIGHT SCENE
IN DEBATEABLE CASTLE.

DEBATEABLE CASTLE, as it was called by the people, stood in a little elbow of land, the property of Ogle, our worthy candidate for the magistracy. It was, as we have said, a small house, consisting of only two rooms—a kitchen and sleeping room. Behind it, however, projected another building, originally intended as a cow-house, and which, previous to a recent disposition by law of the adjoining farm, had been used as such. The two buildings formed the shape of a cross, the back one apparently growing out of the front. The situation of this house was both lonely and central, and consequently right well adapted for the purposes to which Rody had from the beginning intended it. Up until Malone and his family occupied it, the back portion, or cow-house, was entered by a separate door, as is usually the case; but Mat, whether by a hint from Rody, or his own contrivance, had opened a door from the dwelling-house into it;

so that if an alarm should by any chance come upon those in the dwelling-house, they could escape by the rear, and, *vice versa*, any one in the rear could escape by the front. To this house, therefore, we now beg the reader to accompany us.

The evening, just bordering on twilight, was close and warm, and although the skies were not heavy or prophetic of storm, if one could judge by their appearance, they were, however, incessantly illumined by those flashes of sheeted lightning, which, whilst they are full of terror to the ignorant and superstitious, are known, nevertheless to be certain prognostics of heat, and a long continuance of dry weather. A dim and melancholy spirit lay upon all nature ; and the stillness had something in it, at once so wild and fearful, that the language in which the country people addressed each other, was hushed and low ; or, to use the beautiful imagery of Samuel Ferguson, in his exquisite Ballad of the " Fairy Thorn," which might be well applied to the hour and the feelings occasioned by it :

" But solemn is the silence of the silvery haze,
That drinks away their voices in echoless repose,
And dreamily the evening has stilled the haunted braes,
And dreamier the gloaming grows."

" And sinking, one by one, like lark-notes from the sky,
When the falcon's shadow saileth across the open
shaw,
Are hushed the maidens' voices, as cowering down
they lie
In the flutter of their sudden awe."

This wild and solemn evening had just deepened into twilight, when Mat, who had been standing in the little uncultivated garden before the door, was hailed by his friend Gubby, who had approached in a direction that wound round a projection of the hill that concealed him until within a perch or two of the "Castle."

"Well," said the latter, "will we have a strong meetin' to-night?"

"I think so," replied Mat; "and mark this, Gubby, whatever I propose to be done, don't you appear to agree to it; an' don't let us appear to be on the best of terms wid one another. I dunna but it would be as well to have a small quarrel or so, one that the rest will force us to make up, you know."

"Begad, a wink's enough,—I have you. Did you hear though, that Ogle's bate in the law-suit?—Speer has cast him; so that I suppose your mother an' you will have to thravel now."

"Divil a foot, if we can help it. 'We'll notice him. My mother bein' a widow will sound well; an' if he puts us out, we'll thry a trick of our own for it. About risin' the wages, though; will we be able to carry that, do you think?"

"I think so; sure its aisily done in spite of M'Mahon. Let Hendherson get a notice in the name of *all* the workmen, *afther the sthrike though*, an' he 'll think, of coorse, that they've all had a hand in it."

"Thrue enough; but sure, for that matther,

every thing is in a very good train. I think in another month, we'll have the place fit to be proclaimed; and then as soon as I, for one, get what *I expect*, I'm snug for life."

"I have something of the same kind in my eye, if we can—

"If we can what?—out wid it."

"Why, another *spec* that he has in view. He is studyin' to bring out something in the county Louth, where he says he'll want me. But tell me, Mat—did it never come into your mind, that it 'ud be a good job to betray the ould rascal himself to the Government?"

"Ay, but where would *we* be if the Government themselves have a hand in it?"

"Well, but sure if they had, they wouldn't put down these things so quickly, nor punish the unfortunate people the way they do."

"Why that's thruth too; but any how, Gubby, my man, it isn't either you or my honest self that 'ud have any business to put ourselves in Sharpe's power; so if you'll take my advice, work for something undher Government;—that's our dart."

"I'll do my endayvours, never fear,—but now I'll slip down to the town awhile; for I don't wish to be found here wid you by ourselves. But before I go, can you tell me who or what the Rover is?"

"Why, as to who or what he is, or where he came from, I know no more than the man in the moon, up until he joined Sharpe, an' then you know as much about him as I do."

“They’re very thick together, any way; but if he’s a match for Sharpe, he’s fit for any thing.”

“A match for Sharpe! no, but a match, an’ more than a match for the divil himself is the same blade. Blessed man! think of him goin’ to Mass here, an’ prayin’ night and mornin’, as I hear them sayin’! Why, they think he’s a saint.”

“Of coorse it’s he that sets this Ribbon business a goin’ among them.”

“Nobody else, to be sure; but who can prove it against him? He takes no part in it, at all evints. Be off now, an’ bring me a pen’orth o’ tobaccy as you ’re goin’;—I’m run to a mere *git*.”

“Have you the whiskey in?”

“Ay, plenty; an’ devil a betther dhrop ever was tasted.”

“Faith, Mat, you can turn the penny at any rate.”

“Why not? it’s too late for you or I now Gubby to have scruples.—Go long wid you, I say.”

The meeting on this occasion was not full until about midnight; but whilst those who came early were waiting for the loiterers, Mat, who in addition to his other virtues had turned “Debatable Castle” into a Sheebeen house, where illicit spirits were sold *sub silentio*, lost no opportunity of reminding them, that as they were not yet engaged in any thing more important, they should at least do something to help “the ould

K

woman," at all events, meaning thereby his mother, or "poor ould Molly," as she was called.

It may be necessary here to state, that Thomas M'Mahon in being raised to the rank of Parish Delegate, was exonerated from the duties of an Article Bearer ; that is to say, he was not now called upon to hold meetings of his own Lodge, which, by the way, he had transferred to our friend the dancer, honest Ned Moynagh. Although this, however, was the case, he possessed the privilege of attending *all* meetings held within his district ; or in other words within the parish itself, for the purpose of inspecting the men and their proceedings ; deciding complaints ; adjusting differences ; expelling refractory or suspicious members, and enforcing general regularity. The most important of his privileges, however, we have not mentioned yet ; and this was the collection of money, or to name it more properly of a poll-tax from all members, for the purpose of defending the brethren in the Courts of Law, by feeing Lawyers and Attornies, and meeting all incidental expenses whatsoever. This money, Rody, for obvious reasons, suffered to accumulate in M'Mahon's hands, because it did not suit his purpose for the present to transfer it to the Grand Treasurer, as he called him. He knew besides, that the longer it remained with him, the larger it would become, because time in extending the system would increase the fund.

On the night in question, M'Mahon determined to attend, in order to put down, if possible, all

notion of a *strike*, or demand for higher wages amongst the miners, of whom this lodge principally consisted, and to prevent the practice of drinking whiskey on any night of meeting. It was late when he arrived, for the fact was, the discharge of his duties had rendered it necessary for him to inspect three or four Lodges before his appearance here; a circumstance which was well understood by all, and turned to especial account by Malone, who had pressed them to drink before the arrival of the "Gineral," as they good humouredly styled him.

A consciousness of what is due to authority, especially when exercised firmly and without abuse, always produces respect and order in any community. It was so in this case, for the moment M'Mahon made his appearance, the din and uproar, arising from the confusion of loud and eager voices, immediately was diminished into a comparative silence, so that an individual voice pitched to a reasonable compass might be heard.

"What is this, boys?" said he; "is it Bedlam I'm comin' into? Keep silence here, an' have what you don't seem to be overburdened wid,—common-sense. Ned Moynagh, this is a bad state you have your Lodge in. When it was mine it was quiet and ordherly; but now it resembles a kennel of hungry bounds yowlin' for their mate, more than a meetin' of men that's detarmined to sarve their religion and their counthry, if they can;—an' when the time comes. Whisht, I say;—I'm smaaked of yiz!"

"Begad, Tom," said Ned, "I wish ye'd take the same Lodge back agin'; for my part I'm not fit to manage it at all; especially since Mat here has the wife an' mother at the Shebeen business."

"I'll spake about that by-an'-bye," said Tom. "There can't be any more dhrinkin' at Lodges; that's a regulation we must bring in; for the truth is, wherever there's dhrink, nothin' goes on right. But in the mane time for business.—What have you done since you met?"

"Divil a thing," replied Moynagh, "but talked loud an' dhrank whiskey."

"Well, then, why don't you call your rowl, an' do whatever is to be done; an' let us get home out o' this. It's no hour for hard-workin' men to be out o' their bed, that must be slavin' at six in the mornin'."

The roll was then called, one or two new members made, after which they began to discuss the propriety of demanding higher wages from Mr. Henderson, for so the Superintending Agent of the mines was named.

"It's time for us to think of it," observed Malone; "these wealthy scoundrels only give us whatever they like, an' I say it'll be a shame an' a scandal for us to lie undher sich tyrranny any longer; let us taich them a lesson, an' they'll be obadient enough, I'll engage."

"Be japers you're a spunky blade, Mat," said a fellow who was half tipsy; "here's success to the poor, an' the devil's luck, an' a short coorse to the rich for keepin' them so!" and he tossed off the whiskey as he spoke; "an listen hether,

Mat;—what lesson will we taich them, avic?"

"Faith," said Mat, "let them know an' feel too that they can't do widout us; an' that's an aisy lesson to taich them, boys."

"More power, Mat; the sorra one of you but knows a thing or two; sure it's our business besides to take all we can off the Bodaghs."

"Ay is it," observed another; "an we'll soon have our own day, as Mat says."

The fact was, that Malone and Gubby had, by apparently opposite arguments, succeeded in gaining over a considerable majority of the miners—the one by whiskey and direct argument, and the other by that feeble species of opposition which, whilst it seems to dissent from a thing, contrives to give additional strength to that which it opposes. This fact having come to M'Mahon's ears, he resolved to attend the Lodge on the night in question, in order to throw the whole force of his influence into the opposite scale, and to prevent, by every means in his power, a step which he felt would lead, most probably, to unhappy consequences. The Superintending Agent, though a kind and considerate man, was, he knew, both a rash and a resolute one—not likely to yield any thing to senseless importunity or intimidation. As it happens, however, in all communities that are not regulated by enlightened principles, but, on the contrary, are based upon blindness and ignorance, that it is uniformly found difficult, if not impossible, to produce reasonable and uniform action,

and to banish those low and violent passions which seek only the first opportunity to accomplish their selfish or cruel purposes ; so, also, did M'Mahon find here that the seeds of disorder, tumult, envy, and crime, were likely to lead to unpropitious and disastrous events. His elevation to the distinction of Parish Delegate, humble though it was, he now found to be attended by the usual *quantum* of envy and jealousy, and their inseparable spirit of personal opposition. The whiskey, too, which the members had taken, some in considerable abundance, failed not to strengthen the argument on the side of headlong impulse and passion ; so that when the object of their meeting—the strike for higher wages—came under serious discussion, he saw clearly that it would be carried by a considerable majority, in spite of himself and the moderate party.

“Mat, my good friend,” said he, addressing Malone, “you are but a new comer among us, an’ don’t undherstand this business as well as I, an’ many here do. You didn’t see Ballybracken some years ago, when it was in all its glory of filth, poverty, rags, an’ hunger ; when there wasn’t a dacent house in it from end to end ; an’ when the street was nothing but a row of dirty dunghills on aich side, wid a smell that would knock down a horse. No ; you didn’t see this, Mat, my lad. An’ what was it changed it to the nate, respectable, and comfortable town that it is now ? Why, these mines, an’ the regular em-

ployment they wor the manes of givin to the people ; that, an' the good example that was set us by the new comers, in claneliness, and regularity and industry. Let us have sense, then, boys ; we thruv well upon the wages we're gettin'. Let us have sense, then, I say, an' take care that we don't do ourselves more harm than good by sich proceedins as you're spakin' about. Let me ax yez this—suppose now they *don't* rise your wages, what will yez do ?”

“ Why,” said Mat, “ don't you know they must, when we refuse to work for them ?”

“ I know no sich thing, Mat ; nor you aither. If we don't, they'll find enough that will, an' be glad to get it too.”

“ Well,” returned Malone, very deliberately, and with a kind of sneer, “ I'd be glad to see the man that 'ud dar to work for them afther we quit them—that's all. I'd be glad to know him, if it was only to have a shake hands wid him. Arra, by the holy Saint Counthryman,” he shouted, leaping up and striking his shut fist into his open palm with violence, “ the first man that 'ud attempt to do sich a thing—we'd—we'd—”

“ You'd what ?” asked Tom ; “ what would you do ?”

“ Nothing at all,” replied he, getting suddenly quite calm and mild,—“ I'd—we'd only say, ‘ Thank you, sir ; we owe you one for that, an' when you're poor we'll pay you.’ Oh, no harm in life we'd do him—not a bit, barrin' pay for his supper some night.”

"Mat, my' worthy fellow," said Tom, "I fear you're a bad pill, an' have the bad dhrop in your veins. That's not the kind o' talk we want here, I tell you."

"Throth it is not," observed Gubby; "an' myself for one's against the sthrike. There are people far worse off than we are. We have, any way, widin two shillins a week of the wages that's ped at Kilcranagh; an' although we work harder, to be sure, than they do, yet, for all that, I'm not the man to say that we ought to be on-satisfied. So, Mat, I oppose you, begorra."

"As you do every thing that's good," replied Mat; "you're a'most as holy as Rody the Rover, that's reported to say his prayers night an' mornin', an' I'd take it to my death it's only skaming he is, an' that nothin' barrin' rank cowardice hindhers him from joinin' us."

"Mat," said M'Mahon, considerably heated by this attack upon his absent friend, "don't let me hear you say another offensive syllable against Rody the Rover. An' it's a proof that you have but little respect for your religion, or you'd not have the face to spake ill of any one for obsarvin what it commands."

"He," said Gubby, with a contemptuous look at Malone; "mintion Malone an' religion in the same day, indeed! That's not a bad joke, ha, ha!"

"Gubby," said Mat, "only for the oath I've tuck, I'd have the pleasure of makin' you laugh on the wrong side of the mouth, my hurler."

"Here's the same," replied the other; "only

for it, I'd make you whistle broadmouth wid e'er a chap in the parish of Ballybracken."

"I think," said Ned Moynagh, "that consi-dherin' I'm the Head of my own Lodge, it's a little too hard that I can't get a word in, good or bad."

"Oh, you're not a Parish Delegate," said a voice, "an can't have all the spakin' to yourself. See what it is to have authority!—ha, ha, ha!

Authority, indeed! Musha, I wish we knew how he came by it," said other voices.

"Hould your tongues, will yez," shouted Moynagh, "an let us decide one thing first. Are we for the sthrike or not? The best way is to put it to the vote."

The confusion here was excessive. Every one began to speak aloud, and to give his opinion at the top of his lungs. Moynagh at length rose, and with a large oaken cudgel struck the inside door—which had been unhinged and converted into a temporary table off which they drank the poteen—so loudly, that the noise of the bang he gave it startled them into silence, with the exception of a few, whom it threw into laughter.

"Be aisy, ye outrageous pack," he said, in a loud voice, "an listen to me. Let every man now who wishes us to *sthrike*, stand to my left hand, and every one who does not, go to my right; then we'll aisily know whether most votes carries it."

This was allowed to be fair; and in a few minutes, M'Mahon, to his deep mortification and

disappointment, saw that Malone's proposition was carried by nearly three to one.

"Well," said he, "it can't be helped; an' all I can say is, that you'll live to repent your proceedins this night, and the dangerous steps you're about to take. As for you, Malone—"

"Well," said Mat, looking keenly at him, "what about *me*? You talked awhile agoe about me an' thraichery together; but I don't think ever I used words as dangerous as you've let out jist now. Be me sowl, if there's thraichery to come, I think, boys, we may know where to look for it. Now, Mr. M'Mahon, say out your say."

"Well, then," replied Tom, "the first thing I say is, that you are no longer a Ribbonman."

As he spoke, he rose, and taking the roll out of Moynagh's hand, he openly erased his name from it:—

"Now," he added, "from this night out you don't belong to *us*; an', my friends, you will all take notice of this. An account of it will be sent to the other Lodges. And another thing you are to observe, that neither he nor any one else is to sell or bring whiskey, or drink of any description, to a Lodge. I don't know how it happens, but the thruth is, that the use of spirits and drink of all kinds, is ten times greater than it ever was in this neighbourhood, an that's not a good sign."

"An' so I'm put out," replied Malone, with a saucy and vindictive toss of his head, that to a

person who could understand it, was full of impudent self-confidence, and the consciousness that his enemy was in his power: "well, if I am, I have nothing to say against it. I'm not the man to disobay ordhers, nor ever was; and they all know that any thing I ever did or said, I did it, an' said it for the best; and for this I'm to be sent adrift."

This was humble language enough, had it been humbly and deferentially expressed. So far from that being the case, however, there was no mistaking the spirit of insolence in which the words were uttered.

"Mat," said Gubby, "only for the oath, I'd make you——"

He was here interrupted, however, by Malone's friends, who were really very numerous, and who looked upon his conduct as being full of spunk, and such as they felt to be extremely creditable to him, considering every thing that had happened.

"Hould your tongue, Gubby," said they: "mind your own affairs. You appear, too, to have some spite against honest Mat here. Tom M'Mahon," they proceeded, lowering their tone considerably, "you had betther forget your words against Mat here. He's an honest fellow; an if he has a failin', it's on the right side, any way. Do put him back agin; bekaise if you don't, well as we like him, we must give him the go by. He's but a sthranger to us; but you are a M'Mahon, well known for ages in the counthry,

an it isn't a man that we know only since yesterday, that, in a thing like this, we'd folly before we'd folly you."

"Well," replied Tom, relenting, "you've touched me on the very spot that I feel for him in—he is a *sthranger* ; an' if it was only for the sake of his wife and mother an' childre, I wouldn't wish to thrate him harshly, or have him lowered by keepin' him from among us ; but before I do put his name back, he must promise not to act agin, or to spake, as he did this night. Obaidience to ordhers an' to the written rules here, is every thing ; and the man that sets us or them at defiance, is an enemy to our Church and our country, and is not fit to be among honest men."

"An' desarves to be thrated like a villain," replied Malone, seizing M'Mahon's hand with every appearance of warmth and regret : "I *am* a *sthranger*," he added, "an' if I couldn't get forgiveness and fair play *here*, where could I go to look for them ? I beg your pardon, Tom M'Mahon ; a hundred times, I beg your pardon ; and I'll engage and promise to know and obsarve my duty to my supairiors betther."

"That's enough, then, Mat ; you're restored to your place as you wor : an' now I hope there will be no more differences among us."

"Divil a difference ought to be," said Gubby ; "an' sure we know very well that it's *your* duty to report the black sheep to head quarters ; and they must abide the consequence. You read us that yourself."

"It is," replied M'Mahon, "and I will read that part of it for you agin. Here it is—'The Parish Delegate is bound to make a Quarterly Return of the names of all persons who will not conduct themselves in strict obedience to the Regulations of the Society, to the County Delegates, who are to report them to the Provincial Delegates, who are to report them at Head Quarters. Whatever the sentence against them may be, *it must be executed before it is known*. All the Delegates, however, have the power of expelling before they report; but sometimes it will be their duty to report first, in order that examples may be made, to teach the members of the Society obedience.' You see, Mat, I did not take the worst step first against you."

"No," said Mat; "I'm obliged to you. You did not, indeed."

"Now, then," said M'Mahon, "as the business for the night is over, we had all best go home as quietly as possible; an' above all, in this business about the sthrike, be peaceable, and avoid all violence. You have had your way, in spite o' me; but my face and heart is agin it."

They then separated for the night; and we are not at all departing from the severity of truth in saying, that almost every man there carried home with him the elements of unhappiness, discontent, distrust, and that vague but cursed spirit which, whilst it can scarcely be des-

cribed, is certain to gather strength from frequent associations of ignorant men, and to gradually school the heart into that hardened state in which all sense of religious impression and moral feeling is lost in the impulse of the worst and most diabolical passions.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE REPRESENTATIVE SYSTEM AND THE BEAUTIES OF
DIPLOMACY EXEMPLIFIED IN THE NEGOCIATIONS
OF MALONE AND GUBBY.

WE are not of those who would arbitrarily abridge the labouring classes of their just rights and privileges, or wish to see them degraded to the character of serfs or slaves, and forced to abide, without appeal or redress, the dictatorial, or oppressive will of the employer. No such thing. On the contrary, we are, and have been strenuous advocates for the rights of labour, which are every whit as important, in truth and fact, though not so well hedged round and secured by law, as those of property. That the amount of wages should not be determined, *exclusively*, either by the employer or the employed, but by a fair and mutual understanding between both, is our opinion. Had, for instance, the miners of Ballybracken had any just and reasonable grounds for complaint; had the wages given for their labour been inadequate to its value, or not fairly remunerative, they might, notwithstanding,

have fallen upon other methods for remedying such a state of things, without resorting to the foolish alternative of refusing to work, and thus punishing themselves in the very first instance. As it was, however, the course they pursued did not result from an actual grievance at all, but from the deep and treacherous plot of which they were the ignorant tools ; and by which, it is not improbable a great number of them will ultimately be sufferers. Be this as it may, the Agent, Henderson, to whom no notice had been given of their intention to strike, was certainly unprepared for such a step, inasmuch as the man did not feel conscious that there were any complaints in existence against him. He thought there was something unjust and ungenerous in their conduct, and that it was but fair that they should have stated their complaints or grievances in an open and manly manner, in the first instance, and thus to have tried, whether such an understanding might not have been brought about between them, as would have rendered the alternative to which they resorted altogether unnecessary. He consequently felt hurt and irritated at being entrapped, as it were, into a position that was very embarrassing to himself, and prejudicial to the interests of the Proprietors which he was bound to guard and protect.

Malone and Gubby, who, as our readers know, were anxious for their own purposes to bring about the strike, were now, as having taken the most active part in it, selected by the rest of the

workmen to extort the desired terms from Henderson. Accordingly when he sent for those who had advised them to such a course, that they might talk the matter over quietly, he was waited upon by these two gentlemen, who had been formally deputed to represent to him the grievances of the body. The hour appointed for seeing them was eleven o'clock in the morning; and as usual, they found him engaged among papers and accounts in his office, alone.

"Well," said he, when they had entered, "this is a very unexpected, and indeed a very foolish step which you have taken. What earthly motive could you have had in taking it?"

"Why, Sir," replied Malone, "of coorse a rise o' wages; they complain that the wages is too small."

"Bedad, they do Sir," added Gubby, "an' you may take my word for it, that you 'll not find it an aisy job to satisfy them."

"They have suffered themselves to be misled and deceived," replied Henderson; "the wages they receive are fair and reasonable, not to say ample. In fact there are no higher given in any other similar establishment in the Kingdom;—not even in those from which the returns are more profitable than they are here, where we are but in our infancy."

"All that," said Malone, "may be thrue Sir, an' I don't doubt but it is; howandiver, we are bound to state their wishes, whether they're right or wrong. They won't come back to their

work, Sir, widout a rise of four-pence a-day for the common men, and so on in proportion."

"That I shall never grant; the condition of the works, and the returns from them, would not afford it."

"Then what will you do, Sir?" said Gubby, "Is the mines to lie idle?"

"Certainly not. If those foolish men are so blind to their own interests, as to persist in their present purpose, that is no reason why I am to neglect those that are entrusted to me. Tell them I shall give them to-day and to-morrow to make up their minds as to whether they will resume their employment or not. If they refuse, I shall employ other hands;—that is all; we shall then see who will tire first. That is my answer."

"Very well, Sir," replied Gubby—"very well; but"—here he looked at his companion—then at Henderson—and then round the office.

"But what?" asked Henderson; "you need add nothing more—my mind's made up."

"I know,—I know that, Sir," he proceeded; "Mat," said he, in a low cautious voice, "it would n't be honest of us to keep it back from him?"

"Honest," replied the other; "musha, Gor above knows it would n't."

"Can we depind on you, Sir?" asked Gubby; "for to tell you the plain thruth, we're as good as placin' our lives in your keepin'."

"How is that?" inquired Henderson, excited into

interest by the mystery of his words ; “ what is the meaning of this language ? ”

“ But you’ll promise, Sir, on your bright word of honour, never to spake of what we’re goin’ to tell you, in any way that might bring us into danger ; bekaise, if you did, it’s our coffins we might prepare.”

“ I will promise nothing,” replied Henderson, “ upon any subject of which I am ignorant ; you cannot expect I should ; but this I may say, that I shall not act dishonourably by you or any one.”

“ Well, Sir, that’s enough ; the truth then is, that there’s bad business in the neighbourhood.”

“ I am aware that the neighbourhood has certainly been changed very much for the worse ; and I regret it ; but I wish you would speak more plainly.”

“ Tell the gintleman at wanst,” said Malone, “ an’ don’t be hummin an hawin about it ; its our duty to tell him.”

“ Faith, then, in plain truth, Misther Henderson, the whole counthry is alive wid a thing they call Ribbonism.”

“ Ribbonism ! I have heard that the existence of some new folly of that kind has been discovered, or at least suspected, in *another* part of the Kingdom, but I did not imagine it had reached us, or penetrated into the mines of Ballybracken ;—but are you certain of this ? ”

“ Sure of it, Sir ; did n’t they want myself and Mat here to join them.”

"Which you declined, I hope."

"We did, Sir; but we were obliged to promise that some day we would join it, in order to keep ourselves safe; and on this account, Sir, it's not our intention to stop very long in the neighbourhood."

"Well, but have you any notion how this Ribbonism got *into* the neighbourhood?"

"The Head of it in all this country, and that it all came from, is Tom M'Mahon."

Tom M'Mahon!" replied Henderson in amazement; "I cannot believe that; he is unquestionably the best conducted and most respectable young fellow in the parish of Ballybracken, considering his station in life."

"In the main time, Sir, it's thruth what Gubby's tellin' you,—and you'll live to know it yet; and what is more, quiet as he is, and smooth, it's he that's privately at the bottom of the Turn-out; smooth water runs deep, Sir."

"This surprises me," replied the Agent; "however, if it be true," he added, "I am inclined to think he has been corrupted by an idle vagabond who has been for some time located in his father's house;—the fellow, I mean, called Rody the Rover."

"Oh, bedad, with great respect, Sir, you're astray there; the Ribbonmen were fond enough of Rody, *till they found he wouldn't join them*, and after *that* he was in such danger, that he was forced to leave the country for fear of his life."

"Was that what caused him to leave it?"

"It was, Sir, an' he on the point of bein' married to Alley M'Mahon."

"It is very strange," observed Henderson, after a minute's reflection; "but really from the change that has recently taken place, what you tell me is not improbable. Have you any thing else to add?"

"Nothing, Sir, only to never mention our names, if you please, because you see now the danger of it to us."

"I do, fully."

"An' besides, Sir," added Malone, who was anxious to turn every contingency to his own future advantage, "now that you know the danger of refusin' these men, wouldn't it be better *an' safer* to rise their wages a thrifle, than to set them against you? Remember we advise you to it."

"That is a principle I shall never recognize. When intimidation is resorted to as a weapon of offence and terror, it may frighten the weak, and even shed blood for a while; but those who use it, will find in the long run, that it is fraught with more danger, punishment, and destruction to themselves, than it is to others. Intimidation and Secret Associations, send a greater number of the people to the Convict ship and the Jibbet, than all other causes put together. As for my part, I am not to be terrified out of my duty. I give these misguided men,—since I find that they have been *so* misguided,—a week from this day to return to their work; if they do not, I shall

employ others. Now, good bye, keep yourselves free from these secret meetings, and do not fear that any confidence you may have placed in me shall be abused."

The two worthies then departed, and Henderson immediately communicated the intelligence he had just received, excepting the names of his informants, to our friend Ogle, who was, as we have already said, a principal shareholder in the mines, as well as the owner of the property in which they lay.

The usual consequences of a "Turn-Out" are never productive of good, almost in any sense. As the law, however, of the Employer and Employed stands at present, or, in other words, until their mutual interests and duties are clearly defined, and placed upon such an equitable basis, as will render strikes and turn-outs unnecessary, as an act of self-defence upon the part of one party, it is impossible, that such steps in ordinary cases can be avoided. The Ballybracken strike, setting apart its motive, which was not understood by the body at large, presented the usual marks and tokens by which such proceedings are attended. The men having nothing to do, felt all the usual evils of idleness. They met together, and in order to talk over the subject uppermost in their minds, they had recourse to the public or sheebeen-house, where they drank, became intoxicated, and ended by fighting and violence.

The spirit of idleness and mischief are always

identical, and so it was proved here. Mat Malone, nothing deterred by Tom M'Mahon's lecture, any more than the others were to whom it had been given, kept them in constant supply with illicit spirits, and with such fertile and inflammatory topics as were best calculated to stir up their passions to the perpetration of outrage and crime. His mother, Molly, as the head of the family, had already been noticed to quit Debateable Castle, and surrender possession to the legal proprietor, both of which the poor woman was quite ready to do. That, however, would not have suited the purposes of those who had established Ribbonism in the country, and wished to reap their harvest of iniquity from it. By the advice of her son, who acted under the guidance of our friend Rody, she refused to quit, or give up possession, and boldly set Speer and all his authority at defiance. Speer, who bitterly regretted his victory, having lost by law expenses ten times what the tenement was worth, felt doubly annoyed at this unexpected obstruction in entering upon his property, and lost not a day in getting the Sheriff to bring an Ejectment. Now, whether by coincidence or contrivance, we cannot exactly say ; but it did so happen, that the strike took place upon the very week on which the Ejectment was brought, whilst the feelings of the miners were inflamed by liquor, by fancied injury respecting fraudulent wages, and by that irritable consciousness of evil and loss, resulting to themselves and their families

from idleness, which often drives men to very desperate excesses. Accordingly, when the morning of the day came on which the Widow Malone was to have been ejected, the Sheriff, accompanied by a body of Constabulary, made his appearance on the way leading to Ballybracken, which on this occasion, rather resembled a market day, so large was the crowd collected. Henderson the Agent, feeling a good deal surprised at such an unusual concourse of people, sauntered out among them, and asked what was the cause of their assembling together.

"To see poor ould Molly Malone, Sir, turned out of the bit of cabin she had over her head,—God help her!"

"Well, but she had no right to the cabin," he replied; "she got no regular possession of it, and paid no rent."

"Why, sure she had n't time to pay rent, the poor ould crathur; but she 's willin' to hould it at a fair value, an' yet the rascal won't let the feeble ould widow stay, but is sendin' the Sheriff to thruster an' her poor grand childre out upon the wide world."

"But the Landlord, on the other hand, is only confirming his right to the property, which has been so severely contested with him," replied Henderson; "and surely no body can blame him for that."

"Ah," replied one of them, "it's aisy to find a word for the rich, but it does n't come so willin'ly for the poor."

Deep, indeed, and earnest, was the sympathy felt by these misguided people for the widow, even in a case where justice could not at all be said to support her. Sympathy in the Irish heart is very often the cause of many an outrage that is most unjustly ascribed to a worse feeling ; and it may be truly said, that in cases even where the guilt is apparently deep, the very crime has its origin in the pre-existing virtue.

Among the crowd on this occasion, there was one man, who, as Henderson could observe, was exceedingly active among them, passing from group to group, and from knot to knot, and whispering a few words cautiously and earnestly, as he went along. This was Thomas M'Mahon, who, from the excited state in which, from various causes he knew them to be at the moment, strove to exert all his influence over them, in order to prevent any interference on their part with the execution of the law, and thus probably avoid the ultimate shedding of blood, and loss of life. In this he was countenanced by several, who, like himself, began to feel, that there was to be found in the neighbourhood *now*, a principle of insecurity, discord, violence, and distrust, which the oldest inhabitant had never remembered. Both Malone and Gubby were also engaged in reasoning with the people, but unlike M'Mahon, they took care, that whenever they approached Henderson, their remonstrances should be heard by him.

"Now, boys," they proceeded, "for heaven's sake have sense. Be quiet this day, an' don't

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brake the Law, *no matther who may egg you on to do it.*—Take our advice, boys, and be paiceable; *an' if any body advises you otherwise, he's not your friend.*"

Henderson having at length strolled up towards his own door, was met accidentally there by Gubby, who said in a low voice :—

"God grant, Sir, that there will not be blood shed here this day! Do you see Tom M'Mahon? All that man can do he's doin'——"

"For what purpose?" asked Henderson.

"Oh, it does 'nt signify as to that, Sir; but you may aisily guess it. God forgive him, an' that's the worst I wish him!"

"Do you think, Gubby, that there's likely to be any serious opposition to the Sheriff?"

"Why, it's hard to say, Sir; but I hope not. If M'Mahon would n't egg them on;—but still, Sir, Mat an' I will do all *we* can for pace, plaise God. Do you keep in, Sir, any how; for if a skrimmage does take place, they would n't scruple givin' you a dog's knock, if you came in their way; devil a bit, Sir,—an' its a friend that's tellin' it to you."

"But, Gubby, my good fellow, if you and Malone are so very anxious for peace, why does he not surrender possession of this cabin, and put an end to it?"

"He has gone on his knees to her," replied Gubby, "an' so for that matther has myself,—but no use; she's so obstinate, Sir, that all the art o' man, an' what's more, o' woman either, could n't change her mind. No, Sir, divil purshue the

foot she'll budge till the Sheriff pulls down the house about her ears ;—at laist she says so."

The Sheriff at length and his *posse* made their appearance, and without making any delay proceeded through the town, and up towards Debateable Castle, which they soon reached, accompanied by the crowd, who, however, with the exception of some women and boys, that hooted, manifested no disposition to molest them. Molly, however, although actually trembling with fear and apprehension of outrage—a circumstance which gave an admirable colouring to the design of the two spies—yet had been forced to make all the resistance in her power. It was of little avail, however, for in a few minutes the Constabulary, aided by a set of Bailiffs, proceeded to demolish it to the very foundations.

This, indeed, was the moment of danger, for as it was necessary previous to the dilapidation, to remove the persons who were in it, as well as the few articles of furniture, the process of doing so rose almost to a tumult. The poor old woman was first taken out, and her feeble and trembling limbs, grey hair, and miserable appearance,—added to her great age, produced a strong, and if the truth were known, a terrible impression upon the spectators. Next came Mat's wife, their little children in tears, and then their beds and bedding, such as they were, all of which were laid about in different places under the open air. It was in truth, a painful scene, and one that severely tested the forbearance of the surround-

ing crowd. When the last stone however, of the house was levelled, the countenances of the people darkened, a simultaneous feeling ran through them, and by degrees the multitudinous circle began to contract about the Sheriff and his assistants. Another minute and the onslaught would have commenced, when the voice of Thomas M'Mahon was heard aloud :—

“ Boys, remember your promise ;—remember it *now—this moment*—and think of what you owe to them that’s workin’ for your good !”

“ Fall back for God’s sake, boys,” shouted Gubby ; “ let not a finger be riz here this day against the Sheriff or his officers, or any one along wid him.”

The crowd, *en masse*, after a moment’s hesitation, began to fall back, and disperse into groups as before. In a few minutes afterwards, the Sheriff, keeping his eye upon M'Mahon, approached him, and in a very formal manner, said,

“ I believe it was you addressed the crowd first, a few minutes ago ?”

“ It was, Sir,” replied the other.

“ Pray, may I ask your name ?” he added.

“ My name is M'Mahon,” he replied ; “ Thomas M'Mahon.”

“ Well, Mr. M'Mahon,” replied the Sheriff, “ all I can say is, that I thank you very much, and feel obliged for *your good intentions*.”

“ You need not, Sir,” returned M'Mahon ; “ I’d do the same thing undher the same circumstances.”

“ I do not doubt it in the least,” said the official, with ironical complaisance ; “ I am quite certain you would,—I need no assurance of *that*.—Good morning, Sir ; I feel the kindness of your excellent intentions, I assure you.”

He and his men then proceeded on their way, amid the crowd, who, although they suffered them to pass without injury, shouted after them, as they left Ballybracken :

“ Ha ! there you go, an’ the curse of the houseless widow go along wid yez ! You ’ll hear of Molly Malone to your cost, you vagabones ! She’s not done wid yez yet—you ’ll get tit for tat for this day’s work ! Three cheers boys for Molly Malone ! And now let us go this minute an’ build her a house.”

“ Yes,” shouted Gubby, “ an by this and by that, from this day out we ’ll christin’ ourselves Molly Malone’s men. Hurra ! three cheers for her ! Molly Malone for ever !”

They then proceeded to a small patch of Common at the end of the town, and, ere the close of day, had a sod house built for her and her family, nearly as commodious as that out of which they had been ejected.

CHAPTER IX.

A SAGACIOUS PLAN TO BENEFIT THE TRADE OF BALLY-BRACKEN—ANOTHER TO REFORM THE MORALS OF THE ROVER.

EVIL knowledge flies fast. Scarcely a fortnight had elapsed, and yet so keenly was the spy Gubby's hint relished, when he said they should christen themselves Molly Malone's boys, that it spread like wildfire through the country. The double game played by Malone and Gubby between the miners and Henderson, was a masterpiece of accomplished tact and adroit duplicity. Day after day the illegal spirit impressed itself still more strongly on the misguided people, and nothing now would be listened to but measures of midnight legislation and self-redress. Notices to give up farms, to dismiss servants or labourers obnoxious to certain Ribbonmen, to lower rents, or to take back ejected,—and very often justly ejected—tenants, were sent abroad, night after night; to all of which was 'subscribed, the now notorious name of "Molly Malone."

Tom M'Mahon saw and felt all this with deep anxiety and sorrow, and for the first time, began

to ask himself, whether it *could* be possible, that he had been made a dupe of by some scoundrel, who, professing to be a friend to Ireland and the Faith of the people, was yet an enemy in disguise to both. He dwelt upon the matter long and seriously, but without coming to any satisfactory result regarding the ground of his suspicions. There was such candour and truthfulness of character, such frank and manly openness of conduct, about Rody, that to a generous and confiding young heart, like M'Mahon's, suspicion of such a man was, he thought, both mean and base. Nay, he felt, that had he been a concealed enemy, his pure-minded sister would have been warned by her very virtues against his treachery, instead of loving him as she did. However, he (Rody) had promised, on his return, to draw aside the veil which concealed much that was connected with the Ribbon system, and which he felt anxious to know ; for at present, he literally knew nothing, or at least, very little actually about it. As it was, he felt exceedingly unhappy, and instead of the fine buoyant spirit of gaiety and light-heartedness that had characterized him, he now looked rather like a man whose heart was loaded with inward guilt. Nor was he without some similar or kindred impression. If for a moment, his suspicions could be true,—but instantly his generous spirit cast them to the winds ; still he could not but feel, under even the most favourable aspect of affairs, that no matter how desirable the events that might follow, he had

been the instrument of introducing into that part of the country principles, which for the present were ruining the peace, industry, and happiness of the people. He had heard too, that he himself was strongly suspected already by several of the surrounding gentry. The Sheriff had used very strong language against him, to some of the neighbouring magistrates; and even Henderson, now satisfied of his guilt, had expressed his determination, not under any circumstances, again to give him employment.

The state of Ballybracken indeed, was now becoming perfectly dreadful. Henderson, who was both firm and intrepid, had already engaged other workmen, despite of several threatening notices sent him under the signature of "Molly Malone;" but such was the fury of the "old hands," as they called themselves, that scarcely a day passed, without violations of the peace, beatings, and way-layings between them and their successors. Even Brian M'Mahon's family, quiet and affectionate as it had ever been, was now darkened by the gloom which overshadowed the country. Tom was fretful and unhappy, in consequence of causes with which the reader is acquainted—in addition to the fact, that both he and his father were out of employment, and had not their weekly wages, honestly earned, to draw for their necessary support and comfort. Poor Alice, whose unsuspecting and innocent heart had been so treacherously won, was evidently low-spirited and drooping, in consequence of the absence of her

lover, and to add to her anxiety, she was persecuted by the importunate proposals of a wild young fellow in the neighbourhood, named Parra Rackhan, or Paddy the Rioter, so called from his proverbial tendency to quarrel. Rackhan, who had fallen desperately in love with her, on hearing that she was about to be married to Rody the Rover, became furious, and threatened the Rover with extermination, should he ever show his nose in the country again. It was to no purpose that both she and her family rejected him on the very reasonable plea, that she was already engaged to Rody; honest Rackhan swore "that she and they were fools, and that if *they* did now know what was for her advantage, *he* did;" for such were the words, uttered in something like a mysterious triumph, with which he usually wound up all his solicitations.

In this position of affairs stood Ballybracken when Henderson, harassed and indignant at the utter madness of the "old hands," consulted the magistracy of the neighbourhood, who, cognizant as they themselves felt of the danger in which he and the newly-engaged labourers were placed, all agreed in the necessity of memorializing Government for the appointment of a body of constabulary, to protect both the workmen and the property of the company from violence. This step, for which neither Rody nor his two understrappers were absolutely unprepared, occasioned them, however, to precipitate their movements. The third night after the day on which the

magistrates met, was calm, close, and dusky, in fact, just such a one as was admirably adapted for holding an illegal meeting. It was now about the hour of eleven o'clock, and our two worthies, Malone and Gubby, were seated at the fire in the new house that had been built for old Molly. Up to that moment, none of those who were expected had arrived ; and, in the mean time, the following dialogue occurred between them :—

“ I wondher he didn't come to-day, at all events,” said Malone ; “ bekaise, Gubby, although you and I are clever enough, we're not exactly the thing widout an odd hint from *him*.”

“ I know that—the devil's clear head he has ; an' isn't it wondherful to think how he can change his voice an' disguise himself ? I'd kiss the book the mother that bore him wouldn't know him, if he didn't wish it.”

“ Oh, the sorra know!—however—but first, are you sure they're all asleep in the room widin ?”

“ Lord bless you, ay are they,” replied Malone ; “ but, any how, there's no harm in speakin' low.”

“ However, as I was sayin',” proceeded the other, resuming the thread of his discourse, “ we must contrive to have M'Mahon *there*, otherwise it won't be so aisy to get the net about him.”

“ Ay, but how will you do it ?”

“ Begad that's more than I know. If he knew that Hendherson's to get his gruel, he'd never stand it. Sorra much he'd scruple to swear

against us himself; at any rate, he'd make Henderson keep out o' the way, or lave the counthry altogether."

"An' Rackhan refuses to shoot him! Who would think he carries the white liver afther all?" said Malone.

"D——n them, they're all a cowardly crew. I suppose we'll have to pink him ourselves, since it *must* be done."

"Why, it would be betther to get some o' *them* to do it, if we could. Rackhan's very willin' to leather him well, an' so is many o' them; but there they stop. However, I'll see what the whiskey will do—if any thing will harden and work them up, that will."

"When is it to be done?"

"Why, if it's not done to-morrow night, or the night afther, the police will be here; an' then it wont be so aisy to manage it safely."

"An' if the Rover doesn't come, what's to be done?"

"Why, come or no come, we'll go on wid it. You know our first step is to do for the Agent, and our next, to get Mr. Tom out o' the way; then the coorse will be clear, and mad Rackhan will do the rest."

"Is he bent on takin' her away?"

"He is, now; but it was I put it into his head—afther the Rover put it into mine, to be sure."

"It's a right good plan—divil a purtier. Let the same Rover alone for a clear head: he's as full of invention as an egg's full o' mait."

“ Whisht ! there’s voices : here they are. Oh thin, if they only suspected what a dance we’re ladin’ thim, it’s we might bespake our coffins.”

“ You may swear that. Go and let them in.”

On opening the door, the first that presented itself was the redoubtable Parra Rackhan, attended by about two dozen of his own particular faction—desperate and determined men, whose chief delight consisted in following their still more desperate leader in every fight and riot that took place in the country. Rackhan was one of those who could scarcely be said to belong to any particular Faction or Clan—his principal object was to be engaged in a fight, without any reference whatsoever to its merits. Give him fighting enough, and he cared not a single feather who the party was he fought *for* or *against* ; nor, indeed, was he hardly ever known to ask, at least until the battle was over, when he sometimes took the trouble of inquiring what the fight was about.

“ Now, Paddy,” said Malone, addressing Rackhan in a kind of whisper, “ you must spake low ; bekaise the family is in the next room, an’ we don’t know whether they’re a sleep or not. Man o’ Moses ! what’s wrong wid your head ?”

“ Faith, Mat agra, on Friday last, in the Cloughnaboulten fair, there was a fight between my cousins of Cornamucklagh below and them ould enemies of ours, the Traynors. When I saw the dacent bit o’ fightin’ goin’ an, I dipped in, and found, afther we had done, that it was my

own cousins I was helpin' to leather ; an', thank God, we did leather them well too. The Traynors would put their hands undher my feet ever since, the blackguards."

"An' so you fought against your own flesh and blood, Paddy !"

"Ay, an' I'm not sorry for it, in regard that the blaggard Traynors was the waikest party. Get us some whiskey, Mat, an' let us warm our noses, at any rate."

"They say it's bad for a fresh cut, Paddy," observed Gubby ; "it prevents it from healin'."

"Divil a matther for that same, Gubby avick ; my flesh has had too much practice at healin' to be put out of it by a *gawliogue* o' whiskey ;—send it hether, Mat."

To the spy and traitor this was indeed a labour of love, and accordingly Mat furnished him with the whiskey, intimating to him, that he need not entertain any apprehension of the supply failing, inasmuch, he added, as "there was plenty where that came from." It was not, however, until the draughts on the part of Rackhan and his friends had been deepened and repeated, that the business of the night was introduced by Gubby, who, with the cunning peculiar to his disposition and employment, hung back until he saw that they were duly excited. It is scarcely necessary to inform our readers, that Rackhan and the friends who accompanied him, all belonged to the body of miners, who, in consequence of their own conduct were now out of employment.

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"Now, boys," said Gubby, "it's far in the night, an' whatever's to be done about this scoundrel, Henderson, that's keepin' us out of employment, let it be agreed on at wanst. The villain's as headstrong as the divil, an' does n't care a single curse whether we or our families has a morsel to put into our mouths or not. Blazes to him, the rascal! does he think he'll be allowed to treat us like the dirt undher his feet? What's to be done, boys?—that's the chat!"

"Laive him," said Malone, "to Parra Rackhan here, an' if he does n't fit him for a wooden *set-too*,* I'm not my father's son, any way."

"As far as a good honest leatherin' goes, I'll promise him," replied Rackhan; "for that's manly an' above boord, but as for anything *beyant that*, I'm not your mark.—No, no, the divil a dhrop o' coward's blood in my veins, an' none but a coward would take away any man's life, unprovided."

"Right," replied Mat, seizing his hand with warmth and admiration; "there spoke the best man in the Barony of Ballybracken! Be japers, Paddy, you're worth your weight in Bank notes. Come, you'll have a treat from me on the head o' that, any way, for, upon my sowl, I like a man that has ginerosity in him."

"To be sure I'll take a trate from you, Mat; an' now that your hand's in, let it be a good one.—ha, ha, ha!"

* Surtout.

"Here goes then for another bottle, an' only for the bad stomach I have, its not lookin' an I'd be the whole night, an' good drinkin' goin' forrid ;—howandiver, stomach or no stomach, here's your health, Paddy!—boys your healths, an' success to our plan anyway ; an' here, too, while my hand 's in, is a toast :—

" 'Perpetual blume
To the Church of Rome,
And an overthrow to her enemies !' "

"Well done, Mat ;—sowl, the game dhrop's in you, my lad."

"Why," replied Mât, "I'm no great things so far as piety goes ; but still, there's ne'er another man alive I'd let go before me for the same church ; I'd shed my blood for it, if I was ordhered by my supairiors to do so ; an' sure that 's every Catholic's duty, anyway."

"Throth, Mat," replied Gubby, "you'd take care o' number one, in the mane time."

"Would I, indeed ? you 're at your contradiction still, Gubby ; divil a word can cross my lips but he attacks ; what are you at now, will you let us know ?"

"You 'd shed your blood indeed !" proceeded Gubby ; "wouldn't we all do that as well as you, if it went to that. May be some of us 'ud sarve our Church betther than all that fine spakin' comes to."

"Well, may be so," returned the ither villain ; "let us hear it, any how."

"I'd shed my blood if I was desired," Gubby went on; "or *any other body's blood*, if it was to *serve my religion*; an' is there a man here can say as much?—that's the chat!—come, now!"

"In fair fightin' I'll go as far as any man; only put me aginst the strong side, if you can," interposed Rackhan; "when a strong party bates a wake party, they 've not much to crow for; an by the elevens, it's only a dunghill cock that 'ud crow at all then."

"I know," said Malone, "that accordin' to Prophecy, the time's not far from us when we're to walk knee deep in heretic blood; an' when that time comes, if I ever live to see it, I hope I'll be as deep in it as another."

"In fair fightin'," observed the generous Ri-oter, "I'll go to the neck, if you like; but divil an inch otherwise."

"Come," observed the others, who had not taken any part in this bit of polemics, "let us come to an undherstandin' about Henderson.—What's to be done?"

"I'll give him a shirtful of sore bones for you, if that 'll do," said Rackhan.

"Ay," replied Gubby, with contempt; "an then he'd give you a year and a-half in the '*stone jug*.' No, no, Paddy, whatever's to be done, must be done so as that he won't know who does it. On second thoughts, it 'ud be more pru-

denter to give him another chance;—but we can frighten him in the mane time.”

“Bad as he is we must n’t take his life, at any rate,” said Rackhan, “I’m against that.”

“So are we all,” said the others, “murdher’s a bad business;—an to tell the thruth, we had no raison for turnin’ out. Don’t we know now that Gubby there was wrong, when he said we hadn’t as much wages as other miners, wherein we had more than some o’ them.”

“I know” said Gubby “I was led astray in that; an’ for this same raison we’ll give Henderson another chance, although, among ourselves, he’s as great a villain as ever chewed cheese, an’ a bitther pill against our religion.”

“Well, an’ what’s the other chance you’ll give him?” asked the Rioter.

“A flash in the pan,” replied Gubby; “let Mat there charge that pistol that he has, wid powdher, an’ one o’ yez can slap at him some night when he happens to put his nose out. Be my sowl if that won’t frighten him to employ us, we must think of something else.”

“Well, *I will* agree to *that*,” observed Mat, “bekaise there can be no harm in it;—for dear knows, to tell the thruth, I wouldn’t wish, barrin’ in open fair fightin, as Parra Rackan says, to have any one’s blood upon me. An’ now what’s the night;—to-morrow or the night afther?”

“The sooner the betther,” said Gubby; “so I’d advise for to-morrow night.”

"Well, then, bekaise you *do* advise it," replied Mat, "I advise the night afther ;—there 'll be less moon."

"I go bail," retorted the other, "that whatever I say, you 're a'most sure to contradict me."

"Well then," said Rackhan, rising up to go, "let it be other morrow night, an' as far as a flash in the pan goes, it may be as good as a drubbin to him ;—not that he ever was a bad man, barrin that he's stiff-necked in *this* business.—Come, boys let us start home."

Mat and Gubby, having arranged with the others the method and details of the attack on Henderson, accompanied them to the door ; when Rackhan who was about to bid them good night, found himself plucked by the skirt, and on turning round, was beckoned to one side by Malone, whom he followed over, so as to be out of hearing.

"Are you still bent on the *other* thing, Paddy?" asked Mat.

"Firm as a rock," replied the Rioter ; "you don't think I'd go to back out o' that, Mat?"

"No," said Mat, "you would n't be the man I take you for, if you did."

"*You* must manage that business for me, Mat," replied Rackhan ; "you know when you first put me up to it, you promised you would."

"An' will too," returned the other ; "but if you breathe it to a livin' sowl, it's all up wid us. I'll collect the men in sich a way, that they won't know what they're going to do, till it's done ; an'

afther that, if you don't fight out your own battle, your not fit to be fed on an Irishman's vittles.—Do you know what that is?"

"Why, then, by the Elevens, I can't say I do ;—what is it?"

"Why," replied Mat,—

"Pittaties an' spittles
Is an Irishman's vittles ;"

an' that scoundrel, Henderson, is bringin' us fast to the same diet, an' bad luck to him!—Good night now, an' hould a hard cheek about what you know."

They then parted.

It has been said that there is a pleasure in madness which none but madmen know ; and, if we are to judge by the eagerness with which such infamous scoundrels as have recently had their treacherous villany against the people brought to light,—scoundrels fostered by the corrupt sanction of Government itself,—we cannot help believing, that there exists in some human hearts a diabolical pleasure to lure the unthinking and unwary into the meshes of crime, independently of the bribe which lies in the distance. As for Malone and Gubby, who intended to have openly proposed, or rather to have caused some of the others to propose, the murder of Henderson, on finding the nefarious suggestion would not be received, they instantly modified their plan, and made such other arrangements as they knew would bring about the same effect by different means.

"I hope you'll allow," said Gubby to his companion after the others had gone, "that I deserve some credit for thinkin' of the pistol. If we can get them to shoot Henderson, the first step's taken ; then let them thry their strength wid the law an' the hangman."

"The only thing now that puzzles us, is how to get M'Mahon to be there ; bekaise if we swear that he *was* there, an him was *not*, he might be able to prove too clear an Aliby against us, an' that might knock up the whole plan."

"All's smooth enough but that," replied his companion ; "I doubt we'll never be able to manage it, especially as he appears to be sick of the Ribbon business altogether. Whisht ! by the livin' farmer, there's the Rover's knock, if he's alive ; rat-tat, tattat, there's the four knocks, —two asunder an' two together ; rat-tat, tattat, Agin !—Open the door."

Gubby approaching the door, asked cautiously, "who is there ?"

"Open, open, you fools," replied the Rover, for it was he, and scarcely were the words uttered, when the door was opened, and Rody, once more in his old garb, entered the house of the now celebrated Molly Malone. When we say he was in the same garb, we should add, that in addition to that, he had now on a great coat, which buttoned up to his eyes, and from the double breast pockets of which he produced two cases of pistols, which he deposited on the deal table at which the Ribbonmen had been sitting.

"Here is some lump sugar," said he, "for I took it for granted you might not be supplied with that commodity; get me a tumbler of punch now, as soon as you can; I am very much fatigued and jaded."

"Begad, we never wanted you more in our lives;" said Mat, "we're in the devil's stew."

"Very likely; and yet you are no blockheads either;—what is the difficulty now?"

"Why, you see," said Gubby, "we have as purty a plan laid for makin' them shoot Henderson, as ever you heerd;" he then detailed to him the full particulars of the intended murder.

"Howiver," he proceeded, "it's well I thought of the flash in the pan, for what do you think, but they refused to kill him. Mad *Paddy Riot* would n't go beyant a batin; neither would any of them."

"And, you cursed blockhead," said Rody, "why did you startle them with the open proposal of murder? Surely you ought to have known that these fellows are too fresh yet for such a step as that, unless when artfully managed."

"But," replied Mat, "you're wrongin' us; for we did *not* propose open murder; the thruth was, we found it wouldn't do."

"Right," replied Rody; "in that case then you have managed very well; but what's your difficulty?"

"Why to get Tom M'Mahon saddled wid the job,—wid the murder."

"And you know not how to do that, I presume?"

"Thru for you ;—there's where we stick."

"In that case, then," proceeded Rody, without a moment's pause, "you, Gubby, must go to him secretly, a short time before the deed is to be done, and tell him of it, and that if he wishes to save Henderson's life, he has not a moment to lose ; add, that if he does not go to the spot immediately, and prevent it, the man will be murdered. If that does not bring him there at once, nothing else will ; and if any circumstance may happen to fall out against him, I know you have quickness enough to avail yourselves of it. Let what may happen, young M'Mahon must be in gaol before a week passes."

"Any word from the Magistrate?" inquired Malone.

"Mat, my good fellow, you know I answer no inquiries, so it is useless for you to put any. As it is, I can simply say, that matters here look very well since I left the neighbourhood ; the country is certainly in a dreadful state ; but scarcely sufficiently ripe yet. There is, however, little or no time to be lost, and we must draw matters to a close as soon as we can safely do so ?"

"I hope you didn't forget puttin' in a good word for us," said Mat ; "that business of the Connors in regard of the swearin'——"

"Is forgotten," replied Rody ; "If you and

Gubby act your part well here, you will neither of you have cause to repent it ;—I can say that much. Hand me that great coat, for I must be off."

"Did you thravel far to-day," asked Malone again.

"Mat, my good fel——"

"Well, well,—I forgot," said Mat laughing, and helping him on with his coat ; "beg pardon, I forgot ;—but before you go, I have more to say to you about *the other thing*."

"I'll see you in sufficient time for *that*," said the Rover ; "so make your mind easy.—Don't imagine I have any intention of neglecting that point ; only you know that one transaction must go before the other ; *he* must be in before this day week ;—an' when he is there—" he paused, as he finished buttoning the coat over his pistols.

"Well?" said Mat, with the same imperturbable spirit of inquiry.

"Why," replied Rody, "in that case I think we must——. Go to hell, you impertinent villain," said he, recollecting himself, and catching the prying glance of cunning curiosity which was visible in Mat's features.

"I warn you, Mat," he added, sternly,—then changing into good humour, he bade them good night ; advised them to be cautious and steady ; and immediately disappeared.

Our narrative now carries us back a little, that is to say, to the day after the night on which

Rody returned an answer to the Epistle of Miss Emily Sharpe. Her father's wish to see Rody again proceeded from an anxiety to sift him severely, but as evasively and indirectly as possible, touching his allusion to the Black Committee, and the source from which he received his intelligence. The only theory, on which he imagined that the idea of its existence could have become known to any one, rested upon an apprehension that it might have proceeded from an inveterate habit of unconsciously soliloquizing, or talking aloud to himself, when thinking of those very matters concerning which the deepest secrecy was necessary. On subjects of indifference he was as silent as a statue; but whenever a plot was in the wind, or some corrupt project to be executed, such was his earnestness, his anxiety, and the busy, fidgety eagerness of his manner, that the mind, incapable of remaining still, absolutely was forced to the expedient of unconsciously giving vent to a portion of the little whirlwind which agitated it.

After a long and ingenious cross-examination of Rody, upon matters which had evidently, or at least apparently, no connexion whatsoever with the subject next his heart, he could not avoid giving most ludicrous manifestations of this very weakness :—for instance :—

“ So, Leeper, you tell me that every thing is going on as *we* could wish.”

“ As *you* could wish,” returned the other.

"Ay,—well, it's not worth while to make the distinction; you will find, Leeper, that *our* interests will be identical; so that the '*we*' might have done on the present occasion. (How the devil could he hear, or know, or dream, anything of the *Black Committee*, though!—it's a miracle,—d—— me, but I must have blabbed it out to him sometime, in one of those d——d soliloquies of mine!)"

"Why," replied Leeper, "you may rest assured that every thing is going on as you could wish. Yes, and as I have already told you, beyond your expectations."

"Thank you, Leeper; you are a trump, and nothing else. I had no particular business with you, although I told you to call, except merely to confirm—(eh—why—yes—ah! d——e, he's up to it—to that cursed business of the *Black Committee*)—yes, merely to confirm what you have already told me. Now go to Ballybracken, Leeper; ripen every thing there—ripen, I say, and lose no time; and then—after the approaching Louth business—then, I say, for your appointment. I have told you that our interests are identical; and you shall find it so. Now, good night, Leeper—good night. If I could see you in daylight I would."

"As to that," replied Rody, "you need not make any apology; but I think you might allow me a bed in your house, especially when you admit that our interests *are* so identical."

"Leeper, will you allow me to tell you a

secret? I had some thoughts of this myself; but, upon my soul, Emily, my daughter, has taken such a prejudice against you, that I dare not ask you to sleep in the house—(that d——d Black Committee is what he's after, the scoundrel !")

"That is quite sufficient," returned Rody; "if she has taken a prejudice against me, I bid you good night."

"It is not my fault, Leeper; but the truth is, she hates the ground you walk on. Now, that you know as much, and the reason why too, how could I ask you? It's all about your wife, Leeper."

"Not a word, Sir: good night."

"Good night, and God bless (and eternally d——n you and—and—that Black Committee) my dear Leeper. Good night."

We have given only a very short portion of the dialogue between Rody and Sharpe on the night appointed by the latter to meet him. After their separation, Appleton and he met, as they did before, in the stable.

"Well, Sam," said the Rover, "what news to-night?"

"Sure I've got her whole histhory, sir."

"Whose history?"

"Why, the devil's clip widin. She has it all from the mother. When alive, she used to malivogue the sowl out of him; an', by all accounts, wore more horsewhips on his body than ever he did on his horses."

"Such as she is, however, give her this letter, Sam; and whenever she gets outrageous, threaten her with me—ha, ha, ha!"

"No, no; I would'nt venture on a threat; only God grant me grace and luck till I get out o' the house. Sure no sarvint can live in it wid her, man or woman, the thief o' blazes! But do you know another saicret I have to tell you about her?"

"How should I?"

"Augh, by my sowl, she's up to every thing. Sure she rises the little finger in style."

"I thought as much; and I suppose, Sam, it's when she has raised it, as you say, a little *too* often, that she shows off."

"No sich thing," replied Appleton; "but the very contrary. There's no comin' next or near her, unless when she is half gone; an' then she's as mild as new milk. Throth, my only hope of comfort's in the liquor. May the Lord strengthen her inclination for it, the vagabone!—if it was only for the sake of paice and quietness."

"Well, Sam, good night! Give her that letter—it contains an answer to her's." Saying which, the redoubtable Rover disappeared.

Appleton's account of Miss Sharpe's exquisite sweetness of temper was not calculated to advance her interests in the bosom of our friend Rody, or Leeper, if Sam reported faithfully. Be this as it may, the next morning, after break-

fast, she was sitting alone in the parlour, having perused his epistle ; and as the reader may probably wish to get a glance at the correspondence between them, we shall indulge them with the perusal of the two letters in question. Her father had gone out, and she had Rody's letter in her hand when Appleton came to attend the bell—for she had rung for him.

" Well, Sam," said she, " I fear my project, after all, is likely to end in failure."

" Throth, an' that 'ud be a pity, Miss."

" His last letter is a very curious, or at least, a very cautious, and, at the same time, a very impertinent production."

" I suppose so, Miss ; but he's a curious scoundrel himself, Miss, and a cautious vagabone too."

" He must be a very unprincipled man, Sam, to treat this unhappy young creature so shamefully."

" And you tell me he's married, Miss."

" He is ; but he has abandoned her."

" Blood alive ! Miss Emily, I would rather than three ten-pennies I had known that sooner."

" Why so ? Sam."

" Why, begarra," said Sam, scratching his head, " I didn't give the best correcter in the world of yourself to him."

" As to what impression you have made on him concerning me, I am quite indifferent. I have mentioned the circumstances to my father, with a request that he might inter-

fere; but he declines to meddle in the business at all."

"I would rather than three ten-pennies, Miss Emily, that I had *knew*n the real state o' the case before this mornin'. Divil cut the tongue out o' me, but I gave him a beautiful account o' you; but, upon my sowl, I thought it was a love business was between you, an' that you wor foolish enough to take a fancy to him."

"So I imagined you did; and feeling it wrong to incur unnecessary and groundless suspicion, I thought it better to undeceive you, and mention the truth. I wonder my father can allow such a person into his confidence—the fellow is absolutely an impostor."

"An imposthor, Miss! the Lord save us! Is he, now, an imposthor? Oh, the netarnal vagabone!"

"Yes, and his name is not Leeper, but Gibson."

"Gibson! oh, the villain! was there ever the likes known!"

"Go down, by and bye, to Monylea; call at Widow M'Guirk's—you know where she lives?"

"I do, Miss—beside the forge."

"Beside the forge; ask for Mrs. Gibson, and put this note into her own hands—there is no answer necessary. Poor young creature! I shall leave nothing undone on my part to accomplish her wishes; although, indeed, Sam, there is very little hope of it from a man who appears to

be a hardened profligate. I have written four times to him on her behalf, but without any satisfactory reply whatsoever. I shall not now write to him again ; but if I can get his wife's permission to mention the circumstances to Mr. Watson, something may be done still, perhaps. If one is to judge of his character from his hand-writing, he must be a very changeable and uncertain kind of person ; for of the four communications which I have received from him, there is not one that bears the slightest resemblance to another : so far from that, they are strongly dissimilar each to the other, as if he had some apprehension that I might, at a future time, be called on to identify his hand-writing ; otherwise, I cannot account for such an extraordinary circumstance. If there be any thing written at all in his natural character, it is the Postscript to this letter, in which he appears to have forgotten his disguises. Put those two other letters in the Post-office, and make no delay."

In the mean time we shall place before our readers the two last communications that passed between them, if only for the purpose of showing the Rover's talents as a correspondent, and the consistency of his character, whether on paper or off it.

Miss Sharpe to Rody the Rover.

" SIR,

" I once more avail myself of your presence

here to solicit your attention to the state and circumstances of your innocent and neglected wife ; and this I do, even at the risk of having my own youth and want of experience quoted against me, as disqualifications from interfering, as you are pleased to term it, in conjugal quarrels which I do not understand. If I have interfered, however, it was at the pressing instance of Mrs. Gibson, who thought I might be able to avail myself, for her advantage, of some influence that my father is supposed to have with you. Independently of this, I felt that my object was a good one, and not, in any degree, unbecoming the delicacy of my sex. I may assure you now, however, that it was not my intention ever to have directly interfered in the matter, but after my father's refusal to meddle in it, to have mentioned the circumstances to our excellent clergyman, the Rev. Mr. Watson, as a more appropriate person for undertaking such a task—were it not for the earnest entreaties of your wife, who had no wish to expose your general conduct towards her, from an apprehension lest she might injure your prospects. This affectionate consideration for your interests on her part, I am sorry to say, you are not entitled to on yours. I now beg of you to consider the deplorable situation in which you have allowed her to remain ; to remember the solemn vows of love and affection which you pledged to her at the altar of God ; and not to leave her exposed to the many hardships, trials,

and temptations by which she must almost necessarily be surrounded.

“EMILY SHARPE.”

Rody the Rover to Miss Sharpe.

“MADAM,

“The only thing I regret is, that I have not another wife and another quarrel, in order that the pleasure of maintaining a correspondence with so fair and interesting a mistress might be prolonged. Do not, by any means, give me up as hopeless, nor consider the task of reclaiming me as difficult; or if it *be* difficult, will not your victory be still a more triumphant one? for certain I am, that you must, and will, ultimately, overcome. Nay, I really think my heart is beginning to yield already; and, I have no doubt, that if you were to undertake this virtuous task by *viva voce* argument, instead of by correspondence, you would soon teach me to love my wife—as you are pleased to call her—if not for her own sake, at least for yours. Think for a moment, when you look in your glass, what force two such eyes as you are possessed of would add to your arguments; how much such fragrant lips would sweeten your morality; and how delightfully the music of your voice would harmonize all the discordant elements of a heart so conjugally out of tune as mine is. Do, therefore, condescend to a personal interview, in which—if your anxiety for the young creature in question

be as deep as you admit it is—the advantages of the discussion will be all in her favour. In the mean time, allow me to inform you, that the correspondence with which you have honoured me, has been carried on with a *bachelor*, and *not* with a *Benedict*—a circumstance which might not inappropriately add a new element to our discussion.

“I have the honour to remain,

“Madam,

“THE VICTIM OF INEXPERIENCE.

“P.S.—I now beg to assure Miss Sharpe *seriously*, that I am anxious for a personal interview with her on the subject she has done me the honour to write to me about.”

It is no unusual thing to see such a plotting scoundrel as Sharpe the father of an innocent and virtuous child, who, as in the case before us, may be utterly unconscious of his villany. Her sympathy for Rody's wife was not only natural in one of her sex, but honourable to her individual principles and feelings. In endeavouring, however, to awaken the Rover to a sense of his conjugal duties, she unwittingly undertook a task in which success was out of the question. To reform a miscreant, who could lend himself, and prostitute his talents, to the accomplishment of

such callous and diabolical agencies, as those in which he had engaged, was, indeed, a vain and hopeless effort, as even *she* would have felt, had she known him as thoroughly as the reader does.

CHAPTER X.

THE DOUBLE BLOW, AND RODY'S TRIUMPH.

ON the morning of the day whose close was designed as the period appointed for the assassination of Henderson, Alice M'Mahon was observed by her mother to be in tears. These fits of grief were not of late unusual. The time specified for the Rover's return had elapsed, yet there was no account of him, either by letter or otherwise—a circumstance which weighed down the affectionate girl's spirits very much.

"Alley," said her mother, "you are takin' that boy's absence too much to heart."

"It's not altogether that, mother," she replied; "but I'm afeerd, that in strivin' to settle that business of his, he got into more throuble. Maybe it's in gaol he is now."

"I doubt there's too much thruth in what she says, mother," replied her brother; "an yet, Alley, he may have other things to detain him away, to my own knowledge: so keep up your

heart, any way ; five or six days will tell us one thing or another. Although I'm not goin' to be married to him," he added, smiling, " maybe, for all that, I'm wishin' to see him as much as you are."

" Alley," said her father, " go over to the Esker and stop wid your cousin, Peggy, for a few days. She's a fine light-hearted girl, and will sing you into spirits. Go, achora ; in these idle times we can spare you. Idle, indeed ! God, he knows, it's them that's the changed times, and changed for the worse. Throth, Tom, it looks as if a curse, an' a black curse too, was come over the counthry. There's Jemmy Gormley's barn and outhouses was burned to ashes last night, bekase he turned away his sarvint boy, Dan M'Murt, for plottin' to carry off his daughter."

Tom, after musing a little, started—" Ay, indeed," said he, " they are ; ay, changed, an' wofully for the worse, father ; but as to Alley, I agree wid you. Alley dear, go, as my father says, over, an' spend a few days wid Peggy Slevin. She's so merry and antick, that you won't have time to fret ; an' indeed, even if Rody was here, I wouldn't allow you to marry him till we'd know more about who an' what he is."

" I don't want to know who and what he is," she replied, her eye kindling with that generous indignation with which true attachment rushes at once to the defence of its absent object ;—

" I know his heart," she proceeded, " too well

to doubt him for one minute. No ; the very last words I hard from his lips was, 'Alley,' says he, 'we're now partin' for a while ; but I lave it on you as an obligation, an' a proof that you love me, not to let a single night or mornin' pass, widout offerin' up three pathers, three aves, an' a creed for me, antil I come back to you agin.' It isn't of sich a boy that I'd have any doubts," she continued ; "an' I'd marry him this minute widout inquirin' one syllable about him ;" and she looked proudly and confidently at each of them as she spoke.

"Deed I'm surprised at you, Tom," said her mother, "for the words you used about him. That wasn't the way he spoke of you the very day before he went ; 'I never seen that boy,' says he, 'that I'd put before me for a patthern to folly, so much as I would Tom—indeed, I never met his aikuils.' However, that's not the thing. Alley, acushla, take your father's advice, an' spend a while o' the week, or the whole week, wid your cousin, Peggy Slevin. Do, asthore, an' don't be frettin' ; sure every thing 'ill turn out happily soon, plaise goodness."

"I think I will, mother," she replied ; "for I feel my heart very low, an' as if there was something over me. I don't know what it is, but I can scarcely keep back the tears. I *will* get ready, and spend a day or two wid merry, light-hearted Peggy ;" and as she spoke, she passed into another room to prepare for her visit.

"Well," said her father, moved almost to tears

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by her sorrow, "he that gets her will get a treasure that the wealth of the world could'n't purchase. A bright an' a happy hearth will your good and lovin' heart keep about you an' him, an' whatever charge of family God may happen to give yez."

"Ay," said her brother, sighing, "it's you that has spoke the thrue words, father; among all we ever knew or seen, where did we ever see or know *her* aiquil?"

Alice's toilet was simple, and therefore soon made. In a few minutes she was ready for her journey, which was not a long one, the distance between Ballybracken and her cousin's, being only about three miles. When about to depart, she kissed them, and again felt it impossible to restrain the gush of tears which came involuntarily to her eyes.

"Pray for me," said she, "an' while thinkin' of me, don't forget *him*, aither." And so she departed, accompanied by her brother, who convoyed her a good part of the way.

The day was unusually fine, and M'Mahon on his return, having nothing to do, sauntered round by a new road that had been made from the mines, to the town of —, in which the Assizes were always held, and which Assizes, by the way, were then approaching. Having turned a corner of the road, over which jutted a mass of large precipitous rocks, he was met by Henderson, who, he could observe, looked at him with no friendly aspect.

"Well, M'Mahon," said he, pulling up his horse, "you have brought the country to a fine state among you."

"It's in a bad state, Sir," returned the other, "there's no denying it; an' indeed I'm sorry for it."

"I don't think you are breaking your heart, for all that;" replied Henderson, still looking at him in a manner that implied no good will.

"I don't undherstand you, Sir," replied M'Mahon."

"Don't you indeed?" said the other; "all I know is, that if we hadn't a riot at the Ejectment of Widow Malone, it wasn't your fault."

"You must be mistaken, Mr. Henderson, an' very much too; for I believe, if the truth was known, it was I that prevented a riot, an', maybe, lives from bein' lost."

"Why, sirra, am I not to believe my own eyes? Did I not see you go about among the crowd urging them on to violence?"

"No, sirra," replied M'Mahon indignantly and warmly, "you did not!"

"Do you dare to *sirra* me?" said the other, losing his temper.

"Yes, I do, Sir," rejoined Tom; "but how dare you *sirra me*, first? I wouldn't bear sich a word from you, nor from any man."

"Wouldn't you, indeed?" exclaimed Henderson, in a high passion; "but I'll make you bear that an' worse too;—and I now believe you to be the most dangerous scoundrel in the neighbourhood;

and take care, my good fellow, that I don't lay you by the heels, where you ought to be, and will be soon, or I'm mistaken."

"I tell you what it is, Mr. Henderson, I don't know why you should attack me in this manner ; but I'll jist say this,—by the heavens above us, if you repate another word of sich language to me, I'll drag you off your horse, an' tramp you while I'm able to stand over you."

He had gradually and unconsciously approached Henderson in the heat of the quarrel, so that, while uttering the last words, he stood directly beside him. The other, who was a powerful man, and had great confidence in his physical strength, pulled a pistol out of his bosom, and struck a violent blow at M'Mahon's head with the butt end of it, which only took partial effect, although at the same time, it gave him a smart cut in the temple. M'Mahon, who certainly had more command of his strength by being on the ground, instantly seized the pistol, which after a short struggle, he twisted out of Henderson's grasp ; exclaiming, as he did it—

"Now, you outrageous ruffian, you may thank me for not fellin' you to the earth, this instant."

"Villain ! do it at your peril !" returned his antagonist ; "give back my pistol immediately, or I shall put the contents of this," he added, pulling out another, "through your body."

"Hould !" shouted Tom, levelling at him that which he held, after having put it on full cock ;

"by all that's sacred, if you but turn your pistol towards me, you are a dead man;—ride on now;—you're a headstrong and desperate scoundrel, an' I'll not trust you;—ride on, I say, and don't move your arm, or I'll pull the trigger."

"Yes," replied Henderson, "I see," moving on however; "I can observe that,—I see it clearly—you understand the use of fire-arms well—you understand the use of pistols."

"Right well," said Tom, "as I'll let you know to your cost,—if you don't——"

"Ha! do you threaten me?" said the other; "that will do.—I'm now satisfied.—Good bye for the present—I won't forget this."

"Neither will I," replied M'Mahon, which observation closed the dialogue; for Henderson immediately rode off, without again demanding his pistol, and Tom, uncocking it, put it in his pocket, and crossed the fields by a shorter way, which brought him home through the village.

It need scarcely be supposed that he could pass through Ballybracken, his face covered as it was with blood, which, from time to time, he was obliged to wipe off, without exciting more than usual curiosity among his neighbours, as to the cause of his appearance; and as he felt himself under no necessity for secrecy, he detailed both the quarrel and the occasion of it at full length. Among the rest, Gubby not only heard his story with apparent surprize, which on this occasion was probably real; but as if experiencing more than usual concern at what had

occurred, he accompanied him most of the way home.

"Tom," said he, "I'm sorry for this ; sorry that you should have any quarrel wid Henderson ; an especially that his pistol should be even an hour in your company. Any way, you mustn't keep it a single night in sich times as these ; bekaise if it's a thing that he wishes to bear ill will aginst you——

"He does, then," replied Tom ; "an' I don't know why he should ; but ill-will, an' black ill-will, he does bear aginst me—an' did when we met to day, for I saw it is his face."

"Well, so much the worse," replied Gubby ; "don't let him get you into his power. He's gone to day to another meeting o'Magistrates, an' I suppose he'll give a fine report of you ;—well, you see if any outrage was to happen to-night in the neighbourhood—an' you know there is scarcely a night widout one—if there was, I say, an' you to have his pistol in your possession, he might make a fine handle of it against you : it's well Mat's not here ; for I'm afeard, between you an' me, that the same Mat's a bad an' dangerous pill ; so in the name o'God slip me the pistol, an' I'll hand it to himself the minute he comes home,—you know he doesn't stay out late now ; I'll say you're sorry for what has happened,—"

"Say no sich thing," replied Tom.

"Well, at any rate I'll be able *to prove* that you returned him the pistol, an' so far you'll

be out of his power, let what will happen."

Tom, who could not for a moment entertain any suspicion of Gubby, thought his advice not only reasonable but friendly. He accordingly gave him the pistol, which the other immediately put into his pocket, and bidding his companion good bye, strolled up the street to his own dwelling.

The encounter of M'Mahon with Henderson, and the significant allusions of that gentleman, coming home as they did to Tom's bosom with a conscientious conviction of their truth, were not calculated to relieve his heart and spirits from the gloom which overhung them. How Henderson could have been prejudiced against him he could not guess; but one thing seemed clear, that there was among his acquaintances some lurking foe, who had seriously injured him in that person's opinion; or perhaps had compromised him still more treacherously. Altogether, he felt ill at ease, and had finally resolved, conscious as he was of the danger of his position, to withdraw himself from a combination which he saw possessed no one element of good, to either his creed or his country; but on the contrary, had all the marks and tokens of a system that was calculated to corrupt and degrade the people, and set them at variance with the principles of their own Faith, the advice of their Leaders, and the earnest exhortations of their Clergy. All this Tom's strong common sense clearly taught him. But even this was not all. He

could perceive how the cultivation of a United Will; love of Peace; Temperance; Obedience to the Laws; and what is the same, or still better,—an Observance of the Precepts of their Religion; might place a people in a position to serve themselves, or contribute, if necessary to their country's good. This he could understand, but not the benefits of a system that taught them to disregard human life; inured them to the spilling of human blood; and hardened them to the commission of such indiscriminate crime and violence as rendered neither person nor property safe. All this passed through his mind, and when coupled with the protracted absence of the Rover, determined him to separate himself from Ribbonism for ever. Unfortunately that was now all he could do, for he found, to his sorrow, that to check its progress was utterly beyond his power.

Such were his reflections, when, who should present himself to the family, but the very individual who had latterly occupied so large a portion of his thoughts, and not a little of his suspicion,—our friend, the Rover. As is usual in frank and generous minds, however, the very appearance of Rody, apparently flushed with all the light-hearted good nature for which he was remarkable, at once banished from M'Mahon's mind, every trace of feeling that had been injurious to his friend. Rody shook him and his father so cordially by the hand; kissed Mrs. M'Mahon; and sought about with such joyful

eagerness for Alley, that he was immediately enshrined in their simple but affectionate hearts once more; and Tom, literally felt shame and remorse for ever having indulged in a suspicion against him.

"An' Rody darlin', but you're a thousand times welcome! An' how are you—an' what kep you away so long?—an' what——"

"Not a syllable, *mother* dear," he replied,—
"bad cess to the one syllable, now, till I'm answered,—where is *she*?—and how is she?"

"Throth," replied her mother, "the luck was n't yours this day, at any rate.—It's not more than a couple of hours since she went over to spend two or three days wid her cousin, Peggy Slevin."

"Ay!" said he,—
"an' now all the pleasure of my comin' back is gone when she's not here! But sure I have settled all my troubles; an' every thing's right, glory be to God! And here he raised his eyes as if from an impulse of devotion;—but *I knewn* it would, for *she* prayed for me night and day ever since I went—the darlin' girl of my heart that she is!"

"Then you may say that, Rody; indeed it's herself that did."

"Ay, and I didn't forget her aither," said he; "look here; if a purtier pair o' bades ever wint through fingers than thim, never believe me agin.' They're for *her*, sure."

"Well, well," said the mother, her eyes sparkling with delight, "if ever two war made for other, you an' she is;—only think, Bryan, many

another Brine Oge would come wid a shawl or bonnet, or a pair o' gloves, or something to make the poor girl proud; but instead o' that, see what he brings—wherein every body knows, that the sowl is afore the body,—glory be to God!"

"God forgive me for my rascally suspicions!" exclaimed Tom, internally; "I'm afeerd my heart isn't as good as it ought to be; an', indeed, I feel it's not."

"Well," said Rody, "now that I seen yez, an' find yez all well, I must be off agin; but before I go, tell Alley that every thing's ready for the marriage, barrin my uncle to see her; but, indeed, I may say he has consinted too."

"It's she that'll be the proud girl, poor thing!" said her mother; "for, indeed, Rody, to tell you the truth, she was very down-spirited while you wor away, espishilly as you didn't come back when you said, an' that was what made us send her over to spend a day or two wid her cousin."

"Throth, an' a smart, pleasant girl Peggy is, an' as good company as I'd wish to listen to. Bring Alley the bades dhough, and tell her all's ready, and for her to be here on Sathurday, for I'll be back by then. But, Tom, what's wrong wid your forehead?"

"Why, a scrimmage I had wid Hendherson," replied Tom, relating the quarrel and its cause.

Rody shook his head—"I don't like that," said he; "Hendherson's a dangerous man."

"An' where are you goin', Rody?" asked Bryan; "sure you needn't lave us if you can help it."

"I'll tell Tom that," he replied. "Tom, come and see me a piece o' the way; and," said he, in a low whisper, "as we're makin' up our accounts, bring all the money you've got wid you."

"I will," said Tom, "I will; an' God knows, Rody"—

"Whisht," whispered the other; "fetch it, and we'll talk more about that when we get to a quiet place. Well, God be wid yez for a day or two—till Sathurday, any way; an' if she's not home then, yez needn't be here afore me, that's all—come, Tom."

"Rody," said Tom, when they had got a little beyond the village, on their way to the Dublin road, where Rody had told him he was to meet the coach, "I'm afeerd that this Ribbon business will do us more harm than good; indeed there can be no doubt of that, I think."

"Be aisy now, Tom; there's not a word you're goin' to say but I could tell you. Don't you be alarmed at any thing. I have news that will rise your heart, man alive; but first, as Threasurer for your parish, what money have you in hands?"

"Forty-three pounds four and nine pence," said Tom; "but, Rody"—

"Whisht, now, Tom dear—how much? you say—forty what?"

"Forty-three pounds four and nine pence."

"Wait, now," continued the Rover, filling up a receipt which he laid upon a stone, "forty-three—four—nine. I suppose I needn't count it; but for fraid o' mistakes, maybe it's betther that I should."

He then reckoned the money, and having put it carefully in his pocket, handed M'Mahon the following document:—

“ I O U the sum of forty-three pounds four shillings and nine pence.

“ R. O’N.”

“ Why,” said Tom, “ what is this, Rody? Surely it’s not a Receipt.”

“ Not a *common* receipt; but the regular form of *our* Receipt. Suppose, now, I was to give you a receipt that would state the thruth, an’ mintion *what* this money was collected for, an’ *who* it was collected for, wouldn’t I dhraw down a fine ould house upon your head, and upon my own, and, indeed, give a beautiful openin’ to the Government—and that’s all they want.”

“ That’s thrue, I grant; still, I hate—Is that Ticklin’ Tony before us? eh—begad it is.”

“ Is that the ould blade that spits the *aqua-fortis*?”

“ The very same—he that gev it to you so hard the first evenin’ you came here. He appears to be goin’ to’ardst the Dublin road too, so we’ll walk aisy;—well, as I was sayin’,—Rody, I hate any thing that’s dark, and not open and above boord.”

“ An’ in that respect, if ever there was a man afther my own heart, you are.”

“ An’, moreover, Rody, I have made my mind up to take myself out o’ this cursed Ribbon work—for cursed it is, an’ has brought

nothing but what's bad, an' devilish, an' disgraceful, upon the counthry an' the people about Ballybracken."

"Well, Tom, I'll say nothin' now, bekaise I have hardly time, an' me has to meet the coach. Only listen. Will you grant me one request?"

"I will, if I can."

"One request, now—you grant it? for you *can* grant it."

"Well, then, I will—that is, if there's nothing improper in it."

"No, there is not, and it's simply this—I'm now on my way to Dublin to see them that's high up in this business. Now, Tom, will you jist hould yourself as you are, till I come back on next Sathurday; an' afther that, if I don't satisfy you wid what I'll have to tell you, then I'll not say against your intentions of lavin' us; an' in the mane time, for goodness' sake, try an' keep them back from committin' any violence, by every way in your power—it's your duty. But—well, no matther—when I see you agin I'll, maybe, surprise you. Do you promise me this?"

"Why," replied the other, musing, "the time's not long—well, I do."

"That's an honest boy," replied the Rover "Now, good bye, for I must be off; an' whisper, Tom;—throth you might slip over to-morrow to your uncle's, an' bring the bades to Alley, an' tell her I've every thing ready—or nearly ready any how!"

o

"Very well, I will," said Tom ; "so God send you safe back !"

And thus they separated. Did they ever meet? We shall see.

The road now wound round to the right in an Eastern direction, and began gradually to decline, as it crossed the lower portion of the glen which we have already described as extending itself close to Ballybracken. That part of it which the road crossed here, could, indeed, scarcely be termed a glen, but rather a shelving hollow, which was soon lost in the plain beside it. On a stone at this spot, Rody found "Ticklin' Tony," seated with his open hands crossed upon the top of his staff, evidently waiting for him, his face charged with the same satirical and bitter expression that was so peculiar to it. When Rody came up to him he stood, and, as if amused at the natural, unaffected bitterness of the old fellow's face, he burst out into a loud fit of laughter.

"That laugh comes from a hard heart," said Tony ; "it has the sharp ring* of villany in it that there's no mistakin'."

"Especially by a precious old villain that understands it as you do," replied the other. "What fetched you back here so soon?"

"Why, to see wid my own eyes some o' the blessins that you brought to the counthry."

"Have you any news for me?"

"I have none from Ellen ; for I didn't see her."

* Ring-sound.

"Oh, as to Ellen, I know where she is ; but I don't know what devil's breath blew her there : however, about Madam Pink ? Where is she, do you know ?"

"Be my sowl, she can lay her nose to your trail as well as ere a hound in Europe. She isn't a thousand miles from where you stand this minute."

"And you came here to put me on my guard ; Is that it ?"

"Partly ; but I had another business. It's reported here that you're goin' to be married !"

"Did you hear to whom ?"

"I did—to a daughter of Bryan M'Mahon's. Now, James, may I never live if I'll stand that. You must let that girl alone. You don't know what I owe Bryan M'Mahon."

"What do you owe him ?"

"My life. When the counthry was up afther me for—for—what you know."

"Go on," said the Rover, "you need not fear to speak aloud here. There are neither walls nor bushes near you."

"Well, sure you know it, any how."

"Yes ; so I'll help you out with it—for having betrayed your countrymen to the King's troops at the battle of ——— in Ninety-Eight, and for which you have your—pension."

"I'm not goin' to see the girl ruined, for all that. Any how, fifty pounds a year keeps me comfortable ; but bad as I am, I hope I have a little religion left still."

" Good heavens ! is it an old, double-distilled traitor like you, who have the hardihood to talk about religion ?"

" Throth, sure enough, it's a subject that neither of us ought to open our lips on, 'feard it might choke us dead. Howandiver, listen—you must give up Bryan M'Mahon's daughther. When the *pillilu* was afther me, I tuck shelther in his house. He hid me in an ark of meal, where I was covered near two feet deep, an' the house full of rebels, searchin' for me. That was before he went to the bad, an' was forced to come all the ways to live here on the hard crags of Ballybracken. Now, he saved my life, and, bad as I am, I'll lose it before his daughther comes to hurt or harm by sich a profligate as you are."

" In the first place, I have no design on the girl ; and, in the next place, if I had, it is not you who could frustrate it. Remember that I have only to name you to the good people of Ballybracken, and your wretched life is not worth one day's purchase."

" Couldn't I return that compliment ? eh ?"

" No ; I have acted with such caution, that, in any event, the thing would be impossible. But, suppose you let out every thing ; what have I to do, only to denounce you as the celebrated spy of ——— in Ninety-Eight ? and who, let me ask, for the very brief period of your existence after that, would believe a word from your lips ? Why, I have only to appeal to Bryan M'Mahon himself, and you stand convicted—*eh ?*"

Rody, while uttering the last words, had been sitting upon a stone on the opposite side of the road, which was here but narrow, and with singular,—almost wonderful—felicity of imitation, he placed his hands on the head of *his* stick, for he had one, and threw his face and eyes into an expression almost identical with that of Old Tony. The latter was so much struck with the truth of the mimicry, that he was forced to give a sardonic grin,—for he never at all laughed,—and exclaimed :

“You divil’s limb, it’s too bad for *us* to quarrel; only promise me that you won’t injure Alley M’Mahon,—but that’s nonsense,” he exclaimed, “for what is an oath from you, let a lone a promise, worth ?”

“Not much,” replied the Rover; “and for that reason I’ll not give it.”

“Well, then,” said the other, “I’ll go back to Ballybracken.”

“Not till you tell me where Madam Pink is;” and the Rover looked him keenly and steadily in the face.

“Why, then for wanst, I’ll tell you good news,” said Tony,—“she’s in her grave. She tuck to dhrink, and then went away wid big Weatherhead, who was Sargint to the Train of Artillery.

“How long is she dead ?” asked Rody.

“About six weeks.—She died of dhrink.”

“That will do,” said Rody, “Good bye.”

They then separated; Tony turning towards

Ballybracken, and the Rover pursuing his journey.

"Now," said the latter," after Tony had proceeded a few yards, "none of your old treachery, —or if you do—"

"I know who I have to deal wid; an' as for *you*—let the girl alone—that's what *I* say."

"The lying old villain has mischief in him, I fear," thought the Rover; "it's not ten days since I saw Madam Pink, although she did not see me; and now he deliberately tells me a series of groundless falsehoods about her. However, as my drama here is now so near a close, I have no notion to suffer his treachery to let the curtain down before the play is over. At all events, I think he's late; at least I shall make him so."

"Hit or miss," soliloquised the old fellow, "I'm bent on savin' the innocent girl from his villany. Maybe, afther all, the report's not thtrue; so I'll be cautious, an' peep about me, till I see how matters look; for well I know what a dangerous scoundrel of hell that vagabone is."

He stood, and turning round to look after the person alluded to, he saw the Rover in the same attitude looking after himself. Each gave a menacing shake of his staff at the other, and proceeded on his way.

The day passed heavily enough, and gloomily, with young M'Mahon, who, now that the singular influence of the Rover's presence, and his remarkable truthfulness of manner, were not upon him, felt something like suspicion still ob-

truding itself into his mind. Nor was this diminished by reflecting upon the circumstance of his having, with such an easy appearance of business and authority, deprived him of the money on which he had no particular, or, at least, intelligible claim; inasmuch as he (Tom) knew neither the purpose for which it was designed, nor the persons for whom it was intended. In such reflections as these the day passed, and night came on. Bryan M'Mahon and his wife sat ~~at the fire~~ chatting together, with spirits rendered ~~cheerful by~~ the flying visit of the Rover; their ~~theme—the~~ gratifying prospect of peace, affection, and happiness, that lay so distinctly before their child, in consequence of her marriage with the Rover. Nor can we omit the simple delight with which the good and amiable woman performed her devotions upon the new beads which he had, with such a laudable regard for religion, purchased for Alley. At length they went to bed—to a happy and guiltless bed—where their slumbers were unstained by crime or the consciousness of evil, and Tom, as was frequently his wont, sat at the fire, revising the incidents of the day, and attempting to combine them into something that might relieve him of the depression which was once more gathering over his heart. At this moment a knock came to the door, and Malone, on its being opened, entered hastily, and apparently in a state of dreadful excitement.

“Tom,” he said, having first beckoned him

outside the door, "if you wish to prevent murder, for the love of God, folly me!"

"Why, Mat, what's the matther?"

"Hendherson—they're about Hendherson's house goin' to murder him!"

"Who is?"

"Oh! I don't know—the boys. Get your hat, for the love of God, an' come wid me, or you'll be too late."

"In an instant," he replied: then going to his father's bedroom, he said, "I'm goin' up the town, father, for a while. I don't expect to be long. You had bettther secure the door, an' when I come back I'll tap at the windy."

"Very well, Tom achora," said the old man; "do not be long. An', indeed, Tom, it's not easy for you to look well, you're out so often at night. If you weren't the good son you are, I'd scowld you for it; but I can't spake harsh to *you*, at any rate. You'll be home now as soon as you can."

"Indeed I will; an' I can tell you, father, for your comfort, that afther *this* night, you'll never have to spake to me agin upon *that* subject."

It is not our intention here to detail the scene of bloodshed which took place at Henderson's on that fatal night, nor the diabolical success of the plan which was laid with such malignant ingenuity for M'Mahon's destruction. His father, having lit a candle to let him in, started back on witnessing the expression of his face, which was dreadfully wild and cadaverous with terror.

"In God's name, Tom," asked the old man, "what has happened, that you're in sich a state?"

"Ah, father!" he replied, "I feel now that my suspicions wor right. There has been an enemy—an enemy! no, but a devil—a devil out of hell, among us, deceivin' and bethrayin' us—a damned traitor, that the gallows is too good for."

"What do you mane, Tom? I don't undherstand you."

"There has been murdher committed this night. Mr. Hendherson has been shot."

"Saver above, Tom! Mr. Henderson! Oh, who could be devilish enough to murdher the man that was sich a friend to us all, and to the counthry round about us?"

"That I can't tell; but he has been shot not half-an-hour ago. The body of police that was expected here to-morrow has been sent for to ———, where they sleep to-night.—The villain of perdition! May the curse of God light upon him!"

"Upon who, Tom?"

"Upon the traitor, Rody the Rover."

The mother had now risen, having been alarmed by the excited voices of her son and husband, and exclaimed—

"Rody! why, what about the poor boy? has anything happened him?"

Tom threw himself on a chair; and, putting his hands with a convulsive movement of bitterness on his face, burst into tears of keen and scathing indignation.

"Oh, I know," said he, "I feel now, when it's too late, that that deep an' damnable villain is at the bottom of this and all the other outrage and villany that has come of late into the counthry."

"But what makes you say so, Tom?" asked the father.

"Hut, Tom avourneen, you must be ravin'—Is it Rody? the poer boy that never missed goin' to his knees night or mornin'—why, it was only afore I went to bed myself, that I sed my lock o' prayers upon the new bades he bought for poor Alley."

"Father, I can't tell you any more about my rasons for suspectin' Rody—but I do suspect him, and I tell you all the wather in the *say* wouldn't wash him elane of it."

His mother, on hearing of the dreadful crime which had been perpetrated so very near their threshold, as it were, wept aloud, as did old Bryan himself, on reflecting upon the deplorable state of lawlessness and crime to which the neighbourhood had been brought.

"But, sure, Tom," he observed, "it couldn't be Rody who occasioned all this. Is there a night visit that's paid, or a notice sent to any one, that's not done by the villains that has christened themselves "*Molly Malone's boys*," an' that was when *he* was away from Ballybracken."

"Ah, father," replied Tom, "you know little about it—an' it's well for you—that's all I have to say—I'm afeard it was a black day an' a bitther fate that ever sent Rody the Rover to

our roof. Father, go to bed—an' do you, mother, do the same—as for myself, I'll go too—but, indeed, it's little sleep will come to my eyes this night."

"Little of it will trouble any of our eyes," said his father—"an' the *polis* is sent for, you tell me?"

"They are, an' I'm glad of it—Mat Malone's gone off for them, hot foot."

"Well," exclaimed the old man, "may the Lord in his marcy send back the peace an' quietness and honest *industhry* to the country that we've had, I pray, *achiernah*!"

They then retired to bed, but for many an hour not to sleep. At length, when they did, their slumbers were less tolerable than their waking moments. Images of bloodshed—conflagrations—riot, and massacre, floated through their disturbed faculties—mingled throngs of policemen—malefactors—soldiers—murdered bodies—jibbets, and executions, hovered in frightful imagery before their fancies, and filled their souls with that sense of terrible and almost unendurable reality, which, like nightmare, sometimes makes sleep so oppressive and frightful.

Early next morning the inhabitants of Ballybracken were astounded by the rumour of that which we have just detailed—and it is only truth to say, that the village and the county for a considerable distance around were filled with tumult and terror. Henderson was still living, and able to speak; but there was no hope whatsoever en-

tertained of his recovery. About eleven o'clock, several of the surrounding magistracy arrived, who found a surgeon with him, by whom they ascertained that he had been shot through the breast—the bullet having penetrated his right lung. There was, the surgeon assured them, but very little time left for the purposes of justice, as the dying man's strength was fast failing him, and not a moment should be lost in taking his informations, or at least his death-bed declaration. His informations were accordingly taken, which were briefly as follows:—About twelve o'clock, the preceding night, a violent knock came to the door, and a voice shouted aloud that his stable was on fire,—the informant, however, having immediately disappeared. On proceeding to the stable, he perceived about fourteen or fifteen people pressing towards him, and a young man attempting to keep them back, using at the same time low and smothered language, which he could not understand. That young man was Thomas M'Mahon, whom he distinctly knew, for he (M'Mahon) approached him (Henderson) with a pistol in his hand. He knew him by his features, as well as because his head was bound by a red kerchief, in consequence of a wound which he (deponent) had inflicted on him yesterday with the butt-end of his pistol. At that moment, M'Mahon was knocked down by, as he (deponent) believes, some friend, who wished to save him from the violence which that person intended him. He then

stated their quarrel on the previous day, and the circumstance of M'Mahon having threatened him, and taken away his pistol. Immediately, or almost at the same time that M'Mahon was knocked down, he (deponent) received a blow which deprived him of consciousness for some moments, and he fell; he then heard a pistol-shot, which startled him, for he felt he had been wounded; and on opening his eyes, he saw two or three men, whom he could not know, drag away Thomas M'Mahon from the spot where he (deponent) lay, but without having the pistol then in his hand: M'Mahon and the persons accompanying him immediately disappeared, and the servants, alarmed by the report of the pistol, and hearing him groan and exclaim that he was shot, ventured out with a light, on ascertaining that the party had gone away, and found him stretched on his back wounded—the very pistol which M'Mahon had wrested from his hands the day before, lying beside him, still warm after having been freshly discharged.

Alas! to what other conclusion could the man come, when we consider with what infernal ability the plot concocted against him was conducted!

It was now, however, that "*the friends of the people*," commenced at once to earn the wages of their iniquity. Three more, as forming a portion of those who had been present, were also recognized and sworn to; but the claims of justice were still more amply gratified, for on Hender-

son's expressing his opinion that Malone and Gubby, if not themselves connected with these barbarous outrages, were at least cognizant of many who had been engaged in them—information which he had communicated to the magistrates before—it was immediately determined to secure them;—this being the very consummation which they had been instructed by the Rover to bring about; and we see with what ability and success. On being arrested, they played their cards with consummate skill. Malone strongly denied that he was in any way whatever connected with Ribbonism, or knew any thing at all of the outrage upon Henderson; and added, that in consequence of the name which his mother had got, he had made up his mind to leave the neighbourhood and seek employment elsewhere.

Gubby, who had a different card to play, corroborated this in a manner which displayed such alternations of guilt and innocence, as he knew would induce them to press him for further information;—first assuming a bold and obstinate demeanour, but still the demeanour of a man who had been taken unawares, and who felt so completely puzzled that he scarcely knew what to do or say. Indeed, it was wonderful how naturally his confusion and simplicity betrayed him, in spite of the overwrought caution with which the said confusion and simplicity were veiled. He was in a perfect state of terror, and acted his part so admirably—went through all the nice

gradations of experienced treachery so well—lost his battle with such a sincere desire for victory—suffered himself to be overcome with skill so inimitable, and yielded at last so gradually—debating step by step, and with such admirable tact, that no human being could possibly, for a moment, even dream that he was acting so vile and detestable a part as that of a spy.

Our readers are too well acquainted with the history of these melancholy procedures to render it necessary for us to dwell at any length upon the mere details of law. Henderson died that night, having left behind him a solemn death-bed deposition, that he had, to the best of his belief, received the fatal wound from the hand of Thomas M'Mahon.

On that night, too, Thomas M'Mahon and nine others slept in the gaol of ———, whilst honest Gubby was on his way to that *El Dorado* of spies and informers, yclept Dublin Castle. The post assigned to Malone being to remain where he was, for the purpose of instructing and aiding the police, and identifying his victims, he, of course, held his ground, for it was not deemed politic or judicious that "*Molly Malone*," who now stood forth as the representative of the injured party, should, for the present, withdraw her authority from her children by leaving the neighbourhood.

CHAPTER XI.

THE M'MAHONS—RODY'S FRIENDSHIP IN THEIR DISTRESS.

ONE of the peculiar features in the character of Rody was the power he possessed of adapting unexpected events or circumstances to his peculiar purposes; and, consequently, to turn every fresh incident that occurred to his own advantage. When he met Tickling Toney, the plan he had formed to facilitate his villanous designs upon the generous and confiding Alice M'Mahon was a different one from that which he put in practice. The death of Henderson, and the sensation created in Ballybracken and the country for many miles around, together with an exaggerated account of the quarrel between him and her brother, could not but reach her. Common fame had it, that Henderson, the day before his death, had severely wounded young M'Mahon by a pistol-shot, and that M'Mahon, in revenge, had taken his life on that night;—not certainly a very unnatural distortion of the facts. She, con-

sequently, hurried home, but fortunately arrived in time to see him a few minutes previous to his being taken to prison.

But, Good Heaven! what language could describe the heart-rending scene of his departure and her return, or give any notion of the grief that was expressed in the wild wail of his mother and her, and the strong convulsive agony of his grey-haired father! No; the power of language fails under a task so difficult; and we shall, therefore, leave it to the imagination of our readers, who will conceive it with more effect than we could give to it by description. Neither was the sorrow on this occasion confined to his immediate family; on the contrary, it was general among the inhabitants of Ballybracken; all of whom, young and old of both sexes, felt deeply for this crushing calamity that befell so harmless, so hospitable, and so kind a family.

A report had now gone abroad that Gubby had indeed turned King's Evidence, or *staggered*, as it is called, but that Malone, who, however, was out on bail, spurned all corrupt influence, and remained faithful to the people—a rumour which endeared that adroit scoundrel to their hearts. The bickerings and general enmity of these two to each other were now all remembered to Mat's advantage, who, they knew, had often to themselves expressed strong doubts of Gubby's honesty. In point of fact, the inhabitants of Ballybracken, and all who had heard of Mat's truth and constancy, could have literally placed their

hands under his feet ; and the natural consequence was, that the traitorous villain had now got them more in his power and under his influence than ever.

About a couple of hours after Thomas's departure, in charge of the constabulary, Mat went down in a hurry to M'Mahon's ; and, after rapidly condoling with him and his distracted wife and daughter, he said he wished to speak with him privately, for that there was no time to be lost.

"What is it, Mat ?" asked the old man, when they had got outside the house, at the same time wiping away the tears ; "God bless you, Mat, at all events, for you have no traitor's blood in your veins ;—but what is it ? Oh, my darlin' boy !—my brave, my noble son, to be torn away from us like a villain !"

"I always suspected that scoundrel Gubby," replied Mat ; "an' many a time I tould Tom himself that I didn't think he was fit to be trusted. However, I'm sorry to tell you, Bryan, that I'm afeerd there's more misfortune before yourself an' your family."

"In God's name, what is it, Mat ? Surely, there can come nothing worse than has happened."

"No—nothing worse, nor indeed as bad—but still bad enough. You must send Alley from home this night."

"This night ! Arra, why should we send the poor girl from home, Mat ? an' this night, too ?"

"You must, then—an' God be praised that I had the knowledge of it in time for her to disappoint them. The thruth is, Bryan, that Parra Rackhan an' a whole lot of fellows at his back is to take her away to the mountains this night; so now that you know it, there's little time to be lost, as you must allow."

"Well," replied Bryan, "but sure we can warn the neighbours, and get them to protect her."

"I was thinkin' of that myself," said the other; "but it wouldn't be safe for this night, any way. You know it's far in the day now—indeed, too late to get your own friends—your *tried friends*—about you. Parra Rackhan has a strong back in Ballybracken, an' it's hard to say whether as many of them wouldn't give him a helpin' hand as would protect Alley. But at any rate there's one thing you may be sure of, an' that is, that if that mad Parra Rackhan comes to fetch her away, as he will, an' finds people here to take care of her, there will be blood spilled an' lives lost. You know the man, an' that's enough."

"But wouldn't those new *polis* protect her?"

"That 'ud be worse, Bryan; as sure as you'd bring Parra Rackhan an' his men an' the *polis*, bad luck to them, together, there 'ud be open slaughter, an' the people would be shot like dogs."

"Throth, I doubt so, Mat; but what 'ud you advise me to do?"

"Why, to send her to her uncle Barny Slevin's, where she'll be snug an' safe for the night."

"I b'lieve it's best, then—an' I will, too."

"Let her slip over, comin' on dusk, an' I'll convoy her the best part o' the way wid pleasure; for, dear knows, I'd be sorry to see anything harmful happenin' the same girl."

"Throth, Mat, we thought, ourselves, more than wanst, from the madman's own talk, that he had sich a plan in his head; but while we had poor Tom at home we feared nobody;"—an' here the bitter tears gushed out of his eyes as he mentioned him. "I dunna who could put it into his head at all; for he's sich a mad *heerum skeerum* divil, that he'd not be apt to think of it himself."

"That I can tell you, too, then. It appears there's an ould scoundrel they call Ticklin' Toney, that delights in mischief, and that, it seems, has some gridge against Rody, the Rover, in regard of Rody sayin' that he heard somethin' about him that would get him hunted out o' the counthry if it was known, an' ever since he can't bear Rody. He said he'd lose a fall, or he'd prevent him from ever puttin' a ring on Alley."

"An' how did *you* hear this, Mat?"

"Bryan, don't ax me. I heard it; but surely you'd not have me to break trust, an' do a dirty thing?"

"No, in throth, I would not; an' I'm afeerd what you tell me is too thrue; an' I'll say now what no one ever heard from my lips afore, I know there's a bad an' thraicherous drop in the

same Ticklin' Toney. An' may God forgive him for this behaviour of his to me! for of all men livin' he knows *I* don't deserve it at *his* hands."

"Well, God be wid you, Bryan, till evenin', and then I'll come down an' see Alley across the hills."

"Thank you, Mat; the Lord reward you for your good heart and good intintions."

Tickling Toney, though not actually in the secrets of Rody, nor acquainted with his practical manœuvres, still, as it appears, was sufficiently cognizant of his habits and tendencies to feel that he was at the bottom of the outrages which had taken place in the country for miles round. He could not but know, from the conversation which he had with Rody in the Glen of Ballybracken, that the rank crop of crime and violence which was being reaped in the country was that of which his friend had sowed the seed. The involvement of Thomas M'Mahon in the murder of Henderson he also very correctly attributed to him; "he wants," reasoned the old fellow, "to get the coast clear, that he may fulfil his plans on the sister—but if I should never do another good action in my life, I'll disappoint him there." He accordingly seized the first opportunity of seeing M'Mahon and his wife, in order to undeceive them regarding the Rover's character and designs. Indeed, not more than an hour had elapsed after Malone's visit to, and conversation with, M'Mahon, when he entered

the house, confident of being able, at all events, to frustrate the evil purposes of the Rover.

"Well, Bryan M'Mahon," said he, "it's many a long day since I had my foot undher your roof—many a long day since you said to me, 'go your ways now, I have saved your life; I'll keep your saicret; but from this day forrid let me never see you undher my roof,' an' from that day till this you never did, although I was often in the neighbourhood.

"The sooner you go out of it the betther, then," replied Bryan; "once a traitor, and always a traitor. We know you, Tony, an' that's enough."

"Ay," said the other, "you know the evil I was guilty of; but I'm now comin' for good to you and yours."

"Unfortunate crathur, it's little good you ever did, or ever will do. Instead of repentin' for your crime, an' sheddin' tears of blood for the blood your thraichery was the means of havin' spilled, you're goin' about wid the divil's timper, snappin' like a mad dog at every one that comes next or near you. Lave my house."

"I can't lave it, nor I won't till I aise my mind, an' put you on your guard against them that has left you a sore heart to-day, an' that will still lave you a sorer one maybe to-morrow. You're goin' to marry your daughter to a fellow they call Rody the Rover."

"I am—an' you may spare your breath. I know what you're goin' to say. Lave my house."

"You can't know what I'm goin' to say. Do you know who this Rovin' scoundrel is?"

"I know what you are comin' to, at all evints."

"I can tell you, that if you marry your daughter to him, you'll marry her to a man that hasn't, an' never had, one dhrop of Catholic blood in his veins;—a black heretic, an' sprung from heretics."

"Once a traitor, an' always a traitor. We know that to be a lie."

"He's an imposthor—a dam scoundrel, that has two wives livin' this minute—an' your daughter, if you're mad enough to shut your ears to what I'm sayin', will jist be his third, to my own knowledge;—an' what is more, he's the very man that has been the means of havin' your son sent to gaol for murdher."

"Him!" exclaimed Mrs. M'Mahon with indignation, "him send Tom to gaol—the boy that he loved like a brother, an' that he said often an' often he'd copy afther while he'd live. *Cur a shan rogorah amagh*. Put the ould lyin' villain out, Bryan; it's not right nor safe to have him in the house wid us—out wid him."

"Come," said Bryan, "I undherstan' the raison of all this. Rody knows your history, I b'lieve."

"He does—I grant he does."

"Come, then, you ould profligate, tramp," exclaimed Bryan; "Mat was right—every word right. I declare to my Saver, if you're not gone in one half minute I'll throw your bitter ould carcase out o' the door, head foremost. Oh, I

undherstan' the raison of all this well; he knows you—you can't deny it—an' now you'd quarther him if you could. Make off, I say. Wanst a thraitor, an' always a thraitor; but, I tell you, we'll have neither thraitor nor thraichery here—begone."

"Well," said Tony; "all I can tell you is, that the day isn't far from you when you'll have a broken heart for this."

"Ay, that's all you're good for—wishin' an' phrophesyin' ill to your fellow-crathurs;—get out,"—and, as he spoke, he took Tony gently by the shoulder and left him outside the door. The old fellow's amazement at the nature of his reception was indescribable:—"I see clearly," said he; "that I'm no match for that scoundrel. Divil take my bitterness! had I not tould him anything about my intentions, he couldn't be prepared; an' now he has poisoned them against me in sich a way that I can't save the poor girl, let me do what I will; at the same time, Bryan M'Mahon had no right to abuse me as he did,—an' if he suffers the consequences of it, divil's cure to him!"

That Bryan M'Mahon could be blamed for the spirit in which he received old Tony, there is none of our readers, we presume, who could, for a moment, think it possible; and, when Mat Malone came up in the evening to see Alice a part of the way to her Uncle Slevin's at the Esker, they need not be surprized that he heard his account of old Tony's intentions respecting Rody altogether confirmed.

"God bless you, Mat," said Bryan; "I now know by the ould villain's own words, that what you tould us is thrue. He gave in that Rody *did* know his hithory; an' if the boy threatened to mintion it, I don't wondher that he should come here to prevent Rody from marryin' the darlin' girl that he doats on. Alley, avourneen, are you ready? Here's Mat Malone—a thrue friend, Alley, an' no thraitor like Gubby—that's waitin' to see you over the hills, acushla. Oh, my son—my son—an' sure, *achora machree* that he is—sure they won't be able to hang or transport my darlin' innocent son? Oh! to lose him!—to lose him! God of Marcy!—Mat—Mat—"

The poor man staggered, and would have fallen, had he not been caught by Malone, who held him strongly in his arms until he recovered.

"I hardly know, Mat dear, what I'm doin', or what I'm thinkin', or what I'm sayin', since *he*—he—oh Tom—Tom—my noble—my loyal son—where are you this minute?—an' what—"

"For heaven's sake, Bryan, think of your daughter as well as your son. Is she ready?"

"Oh, God bless you, Mat!—I feel this kindness.—Alley, *achora machree*, are you ready? Here's Mat Malone, a thrue friend, waitin' to convoy you to your uncle's, an' you know for why, Alley, *acushla*."

"Father," said she, weeping aloud, although the delay on her part had been occasioned by her attempt to console her mother, who was literally almost distracted by the unexpected charge

that had been brought against Tom, and his sudden arrest; "father, I know that Rody won't lose one minute in comin' to us, an' that he will bring good news."

"I know that, too, Alley darlin'; for although Tom had suspicions of him wanst, we know ourselves that it was wrong, an' Tom was sorry for it."

"Oh, I wish he was here, father, he would be a safeguard an' a protection to me, in the place of our darlin' Tom!"

"Now, Bryan M'Mahon, I won't stand this," said Mat; "Alley, good girl, come away; if we wait here till all your"——he checked himself, and Alley took his arm, and they proceeded, she in tears and bitter sorrow, and he in —— but the reader must have patience.

Mat, with all becoming caution, took a way that brought them up behind the town, or at least the greater portion of it; they then crossed the upper part of the street and came out upon the open common, where his mother's house had been built.

"I want to lave a bit of a message wid the wife, Alley," he said; "so jist wait about half a minute, an' then I'm wid you."

She did so; he almost immediately rejoined her, and both resumed their journey. The poor girl wept the greater part of the way, and Mat endeavoured to give her all the consolation in his power, especially with reference to Rody, who, he had no doubt, would soon return and

show himself a true friend to the family. In this way, the greater part of the distance had been traversed, and her uncle Slevin's house was within' a few hundred yards, when they heard a rapid foot following them, and, on turning about, they were joined by Rody himself, now almost breathless with the speed of his pursuit and his anxiety to overtake them.

"Oh, my poor Alley!" said he, folding her in his arms; "my own darlin' girl, what misfortune is this that has come over you in my absence!"

Alley laid her head on his bosom and wept bitterly, but made no immediate reply; at length she said:—

"Oh, Rody dear, I'm so glad you're come back; for we're all now in distress and sorrow for poor Tom that was so fond of you, an' was so much your comrade."

"Well, well, Alley dear; don't be too much cast down. They can't do him any harm—so be a woman; I have a message for you from your father."

"A message! what is it?"

"You're not to stay in your uncle's, but to come wid me. Short as the time is, Parra Rackhan has heerd of your comin' here, an' he's bent on havin' you off wid him this very night."

"God help me," she exclaimed; "what will I do, an' what will become of me! You seen my father, then?"

"It was him sent me afther you, an' tould me where you were gone to. 'Tell her,' says he,

‘it’s my wish you should take her to a safe place for a while, till we do something wid this wild Parra Rackhan—get him bound over, or something, an’ tell her, Rody, if she doubts what you say, that this ’ill be a token from me an’ her mother,’—the last words she said when she was lavin’ the house wid poor honest kind Mat was—*‘Oh, I wish Rody was here, father, he would be a safeguard an’ a protection to me in the place of our darlin’ Tom!’* Now, Alley darlin’, am I right or am I wrong?”

“You’re right, Rody; but then the last words poor Tom spoke to me, was not to go from home wid you until afther we wor married.”

“I know they wor; but he never dreamt of Parra Rackhan’s takin’ you. But, sure, I seen Tom himself this day—an’ if you know his hand-writin’—”

“Know it! I’d know it over the world.”

“Well, then, when we go up to your uncle’s to tell them this, I’ll show you a few lines that he sent you from undher his own hand, desirin’ you to come an’ be married by my uncle, an’ lave the neighbourhood where Parra Rackhan is altogether. I tell you my uncle, Father M’Dowdle, expects you, an’ surely you’ll be safe wid him.”

The poor girl had no further argument to urge, especially as she at once recognised her brother’s handwriting on reading it over in her uncle’s. That family, prompted by their affectionate regard for her safety, at once agreed in

the reasonableness of Rody's proposal, and persuaded her to the necessity of putting herself under his protection and care.

She accordingly took leave of them with many tears, and in the cold shadow of an October night, departed from the relatives who loved her so tenderly, under the treacherous guidance of her Satanic tempter.

CONCLUSION.

“And the last state of that *place* was worse than the first.”

THE murder of Henderson would have created a very extraordinary sensation, were it not that, unfortunately, the condition of the country and the frequency of outrage in some degree prepared the public mind for the occurrence of such atrocities. Notwithstanding this state of things, however, the excitement was indeed very great, and the loss to the whole neighbourhood not only serious but irreparable, as the reader will immediately perceive. On the intelligence of his assassination being communicated to the proprietors of the mines, they immediately repaired to the spot ; and, upon a close investigation of the feelings which pervaded the misguided people, as exhibited in so many overt acts of violence, midnight meetings, threats and injury to both person and property, they came to the painful but fixed and deliberate resolution of closing their labours, and abandoning the

mines as a speculation altogether. Accordingly, on the morning of Henderson's funeral, the following printed notice was found posted upon every conspicuous place in and about Ballybracken and the surrounding districts:—

“NOTICE.

“The Proprietors of the Ballybracken Mines take this opportunity of stating that, in consequence of the murder of their respected Agent, Matthew Henderson, Esq., and of the disorganized state of the country at large, in which, they are sorry to find, neither life nor property is safe, they have come to the resolution of closing the mines and dissolving the Company;—and they hereby declare the Company dissolved, and the works finally abandoned.”

Such is, and ever will be, the natural consequence of violating the laws of the land—or at least one portion of that consequence. The inhabitants of the neighbourhood now found out, by way of a discovery, what admirable politicians they were, and saw, in the long perspective of idleness that lay before them, and its usual attendants, want and crime, all that is usually gained when they allow themselves to be insiduously tempted by interested knaves and traitors into illegal combinations, as a means of improving their condition. They may rest assured that, as in the case of Ballybracken, such combinations will

end by bringing down a double punishment upon themselves—the punishment of want and the punishment of law,—or, in other words, starvation and the gallows. This is a doctrine, too, so plain and obvious, that the poorest and most ignorant man in the country has only to glance at the wide volume of experience to feel its truth; and yet, such is the unaccountable infatuation of the people, that they *will* be corrupted and misled by their enemies, and will *not* be advised and warned by their friends. They are, at this moment, surrounded by an invisible body of spies and detectives, trained and disciplined into the deepest reaches of treachery and iniquity, under the very sanction of government, which is not ashamed to degrade itself by the double guilt of employing a class of men whose services are calculated to destroy the confidential intercourse of society at large, and are clearly at variance, besides, with the spirit of a free constitution.

Henderson's funeral was attended by the principal gentry of the County, among whom were two acquaintances of ours, to wit, Messrs. Sharpe and Ogle. Sharpe, after the interment, returned home; but Ogle, anxious to remain for certain purposes connected with his own interests, slept that night in Henderson's house, there being no Inn of sufficient respectability to entertain him in the town. About eleven o'clock, on his reaching his bed-room, which was on the ground floor, a shot was fired at him, through the window, by some person unknown. Malone, who happened to

have been passing a little after the time, on hearing of the circumstance, stated, that he met a man—whom he described, but did not know—running at considerable speed towards the mines. We mention this circumstance now, not only because it properly comes in here, but because the reader will be likely to understand it by and bye.

Independently, however, of the resolution come to by the Proprietors of the mines, others, equally disastrous to that part of the country were adopted by the local magistrates. A meeting was called by the Lord Lieutenant of the county, who himself acted as chairman, at which strong resolutions were drawn up, and a memorial, embodying them, framed and transmitted to the Government, urging the necessity of placing certain portions of the country under Martial Law.

An application so powerfully supported, not merely by the circumstances of the country, but by the parties who had signed it, was looked upon as a document of sufficient weight to justify the Government in complying with its prayer. A Privy Council was accordingly held, and in about a week or ten days the Proclamation was issued, and the good people of Ballybracken, and one or two of the neighbouring Baronies, had the satisfaction of finding themselves under the comfortable operation of the Insurrection Act.

Our friend Sharpe—he of the Black Committee—was now in his glory. The disorganization

of society that took place in this devoted town and neighbourhood, renders it imperative on us to detail a brief conversation which occurred between him and Mr. Ogle, who, as the reader knows, was proprietor of the district that contained the mines, or at least, the most valuable part of them.

"Ogle, my dear fellow," said Sharpe, "I asked you to breakfast with me this morning, for a reason I have. Could you guess what it is?"

"Whythen, begad, an upon my sowl an' honour, I think I have a good right. My honest five hundre's gone; and barring you have the Commission ready drawn out for me, I know of nothing else. Come, I'll hould goold to silver it is."

"Ah, my dear Ogle," replied his friend, "you are a confounded knowing shot. Read that—but how the deuce could you smell it out, eh? especially as I told you plainly in my note, that you were now a J. P., which you once told me, properly enough, stands for *Justice of Quorum*. Come now, fork out the other five hundred, and there is your Commission, sent under cover to myself; but remember it was Forde got it for you—not I: you will please not to forget *that*, my good friend. Come now, fork out."

"And I am a Magistrate at last!" exclaimed Ogle; "well, any how, long life to the Lord Chancellor; for, upon my sowl and honour, and dang my bones, but he has made many a gentle-

man in his day. Look at those notes ; you see I came provided with them."

"Thank you, Ogle. Yes, you now stand before the world a gentleman—of the Lord Chancellor's making. But, Ogle, my dear fellow, you happen to be proprietor of these mines where poor Henderson was so barbarously murdered ; don't you ?"

"Don't you know I do ?"

"Well, certainly I do. Don't you remember that some time ago I got a person—a poor, simple, but honest fellow, named Malone—employment there ?"

"I do ; I enclosed your letter myself to Henderson ; so that it was I as much as you that got him the employment."

"Yes, and the poor fellow is consequently so grateful to you for it, that he has sent me word privately to guard you against ever showing your nose in the neighbourhood, otherwise, he says, you will never carry your life out of it. You are marked. I had some conversation with him on the day of the funeral, and his description of the state of the country was absolutely frightful. Why they should have attempted your life, though, is a mystery."

"To me it is ; for *I'm* not a bad landlord—begad *I'm* not ; but, for all that, the bullet broke the lookin'-glass within a full yard and a half of me. Faith, I left wet sheets behind me that night, any how ; for I cut before they had time to examine them the next morning. Begad, I never was in such a sweat."

"Ogle, are you mad?"

"Mad! no, I hope not."

"I mean, do you intend to keep that property in your possession? or to have any thing at all to do with it?"

"Why, how would you advise me to act?"

"Why, of course, to sell it—to get clear of it—to wash your hands out of it—to shake the dust of your feet against it—in a word, to get rid of it, and lead a safe, gentlemanly life, as a Country Magistrate, for the rest of your days, without running the risk of having them curtailed, by remaining the owner of any property in that dangerous and most blood-thirsty neighbourhood."

"Begad, I'm inclined to think you're right. I believe the people take more delight now in shooting a magistrate than they do a common man. I'll think of it, Mr. Sharpe."

"Yes, for your own sake, Mr. Ogle; having been once shot at, I think it is time you should."

"Begad I will, then; for if I lost my life, of what use would my property be to me?"

"D——e, Ogle, but you are an oracle: the truth and originality of that observation are worth their weight in gold. Of course, when a man's coffin is nailed up his premises are very scanty. D——e, I say, Ogle, but you are an oracle, and will—if your precious life is spared—shine on the Bench as a J.P., or Justice of Quorum yet."

It is not our intention here to detail an

account of Tom M'Mahon's trial, nor to attempt describing the double weight of woe which bent down the spirits of his simple-hearted parents to the lowest depths of agonizing sorrow and wild despair, on hearing the awful sentence of death pronounced against him. Nor was this their only sorrow. Of their daughter, Alley, they had received no intelligence, although the lying message—purporting to be from her father—which, the reader need not be told, was communicated to Rody by Malone, in his own cottage, was a sufficient proof, as well as the forged letter from Tom, that the Rover was a double-dyed villain, and had brought death and ruin among them.

Of the Judge's Charge, at the trial, we shall give a few sentences, merely that the reader may perceive how successfully the meshes of perjury and ingenuity were wound round him from the beginning to the close—as they may, at this day, around any one who will suffer himself to be tampered with upon a similar subject.

His lordship, after having put on the Black Cap, and gone over the evidence to the jury at considerable length, thus proceeded:—

“As for you, Thomas M'Mahon, it is seldom that a case of such hardened and deliberate atrocity has come before a Court of Justice; and never have I witnessed a conviction founded upon stronger or clearer evidence. Here is an unfortunate gentleman, with whom you have a quarrel, and from whom you wrest his pistol—

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and who has deposed, on the threshold of Eternity, that your last word to him was a threat. On that very night you bring fourteen or fifteen persons with you to his house, for the foul and diabolical purpose of taking his life ; and, before doing this, the two witnesses, Gubby and Malone, have sworn that you drew the charge out of the pistol, to make certain that it contained a bullet, adding, when you had re-loaded it, *this will clinch the villain !* And when Gubby, who it appears shrunk back from the crime, struck you down, with the hope of being able to save your victim, it is shocking to think of the murderous pertinacity with which you leaped up and shot him unprepared, whilst lying on the ground, having been felled by a blow aimed at yourself, but which accidentally struck him. Your leaving the pistol behind you I consider to be one of those oversights, resulting from the excitement of guilt, by which crime is frequently detected. In fact, the force of the evidence against you is irresistible. Ribbon documents have been found in your house, and although you say you received them from another, yet they were all proved to be in your own handwriting. These things go to show that your connections were bad, your principles corrupt, and your position such as almost necessarily leads to crime. I now entreat you to prepare for a much more awful tribunal than this, for I feel it my duty, both to you and the country, to say—that no hope of mercy in *this* world can be

extended to you. The sentence of the Court is—that you be taken back to the place from whence you came, and from thence, on the tenth instant, to the front of this Gaol, and there be hanged by the neck till you are dead, and may God have mercy on your soul!”

“As for you, Patrick Corcoran, commonly known as Parra Rackhan, or Paddy the Rioter, inasmuch as you took no active part in the murder, the sentence of the Court is—that you, and the other persons present (here he named them) be transported to parts beyond the seas, for the term of your natural lives, and so far as you yourself are concerned, the country will have a good riddance of you also.”

“Oh, thin, you puffin ould scoundhrel, if I only had you behind Crocknagooran wid a cudgel in your fist an anodher in mine—for I’d give you fair play if the ould *dioual* was in you—maybe it’s I that would n’t bate the Rogue’s March on your carcase!”

* * * *

Six years have elapsed. It is an evening in autumn, and the sun is not far from the place of his going down in the west. Two aged men have met in the village of Ballybracken, which is now desolate and in ruins. The neatness of the houses, of the gardens, and of the little flower plots before the doors,—is gone. Most of the houses are roofless, but few of them even inhabited, and on each and all lies the green,

rank, rotting spirit of solitude and desolation. The streets again are dust or mud, according as the weather is wet or dry, the filthy dunghill has once more regained its position in the street, and all the evidences of desertion, want, and destitution tell a melancholy tale to the Irishman's heart. The summer evenings have passed, over and over, year after year, silent and without either innocent mirth or healthful amusement. No more does the cheerful dance or the rustic song enliven the village green ; nor the bounding leap, nor the vigorous cast of the stone produce their generous rivalry. No ; for the spoiler has been there—the spy has been there, and the traitor, like a spirit of destruction, has carried the contagion of crime among them. But where are the people ? Many of the old have sunk under the calamities of crime, and gone, with broken hearts, down to the grave. Many of the young have been consigned to the ruthless hands of the Executioner, or are in another hemisphere, dragging the contumelious fetter of the felon. There is, alas, now no more order here, no more industry—but there is peace, for the peace of Ballybracken is the solitude of the desert.

Yes—six years have elapsed, and two aged men have met in this ruined village. One of them is remarkable for that keen and unsettled look which tells of a conscience that burns in the agony of unrepented crime ; the other, whose hair is white, bears on his furrowed countenance

the touching simplicity of an unoffending life, overshadowed by the mournful expression of undeserved sorrow. These two aged men pause and look upon each other :—

“ Bryan M'Mahon ! are you the man that *was* Bryan M'Mahon ? ” exclaimed he, whose eye reflected the light of inward bitterness.

“ You have well said it,” replied the other ; “ I *am* the man that was Bryan M'Mahon ; I think I know your voice, for my sight isn't what it was. If I don't mistake, you're Antony Tracy.”

“ I am—an' I wish I was not.”

“ Antony, I ax your pardon for the thratement I gave you, when you thought to save *her*.”

“ Oh, I was no match for that fellow ; but, Bryan, tell me, for I haven't been here since that bitther day, what happened ?—although I needn't ax, for I see it on the misery of the place.”

“ I have no one but myself now, barrin' God that takes care of me, an' supports me, glory be to his name ! ”

“ And you're alone ? ”

“ I am—they're *there*—the three,” he replied, pointing to the sky ; “ when *he* suffered, the poor mother wouldn't have patience, so the heart widin her soon broke—she never riz her head since that black day, an' her cry was—‘ My son—my son, where are you from me ? ’ and so in less than twelve months she followed him. Durin' all that time, we never seen or got any account of Alley ; but, in about a year an' a half, a pale lookin' young woman, wid a sick infant in her

arms, came into the house to me, an' on lookin' at her I saw it was our darlin'. She could hardly spake from weakness, an' when she fainted in my arms, I was afeerd it was death."

'Oh, where—where is my mother,' says she.

'Alley achora,' says I; 'she wouldn't stay—she wouldn't stay afther *him*.' In two or three days the baby died, and that day month she laid her head down, and I thought first it was sleep—an' so it was the *long* sleep. I closed her eyes myself, an' when I looked at her, an' thought of what she once was, an' what she was brought to, I said to myself, what would half the people that God gave life to do, if there wasn't a betther world than this? The priest that attended her said she was more an angel than a woman—an' indeed I think so. Howandiver, she followed them, an' I'm here still; but I won't be long afther them, I hope! The few neighbours that's left is kind to me, an' let's me want for neither bit nor sup. This property, Mines an' all, is now in the hands of a gentleman named Sharpe, who bought it from the large man, Ogle, I believe, bekaise he was afeerd to come near it, ever since he was fired at some years ago, an' that's all I can tell you."

"Doesn't there come sometimes along wid Sharpe a gentleman named Bowles to this neighbourhood,—that's married to his daughter?"

"I can't say; for I didn't hear his name."

"But what about your daughter? did Rody mrary her?"

"Ay—a false marriage! for it was only about six weeks afore she came home that she found out he had two wives more."

"An' you don't curse him!"

"Oh, no—I LOVE HIM TO GOD!"

"That same scoundrel had better luck than he deserved," replied Toney; "both his wives are dead, an' he is now married by his proper name to — there's no use in tellin' him," he added; "if he hears that he's now Sharpe's son-in-law, it may only vex his heart more than it is already;" for Tracey calculated that it would produce the same effect upon the sublime simplicity of M'Mahon's religion that it would upon his own heart.

"That same Rody, then," said he, "coaxed his present wife a'most in spite of her—for it's he that has the sweet tongue of his own; an' now himself an' another friend of his—a magistrate—is both in high favour wid the Government, as I happen to know, an' it appears that they sent them a plan—an' a very ingainious one—for carrying on the Spy System in the counthry, an' that the Government has taken it up, an' is now actin' upon it."

"Well," replied M'Mahon, "if they knew him as well as I do now, they wouldn't take sich a man as that by the hand."

"You remimber Malone and Gubby, the spies?"

"I do; — but, oh, don't name them, barrin' you wish to drive the little raison I have away from me."

" Well, these two daicent men has a snug situation, aich o' thim, in the Spy System, an' I haven't any doubt but they'll airn their bread *honestly!*"

We close by adding, that old Toney's information was correct. The abominable and perfidious plan of Detective Police, proposed on that occasion to the Government, was not only entertained, but adopted; and the consequence is, that, so far as that service is concerned, Government are certainly under serious obligations to Rody the Rover.

Very soon after the interview just detailed, Bryan M'Mahon was favoured by the Being whose religion proved the sustaining principle of his simple and confiding heart, with the gratification of his long and earnest wishes. In two months afterwards, he died a pattern of true but humble greatness, and was laid beside those whom he had loved; so that this virtuous family of peasant life now lie in that peace which the plot of the spy or the traitor can never more disturb.

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